

Scarlet Street

The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

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The X-Files
Chinatown
The Night Stalker
King Kong vs Godzilla

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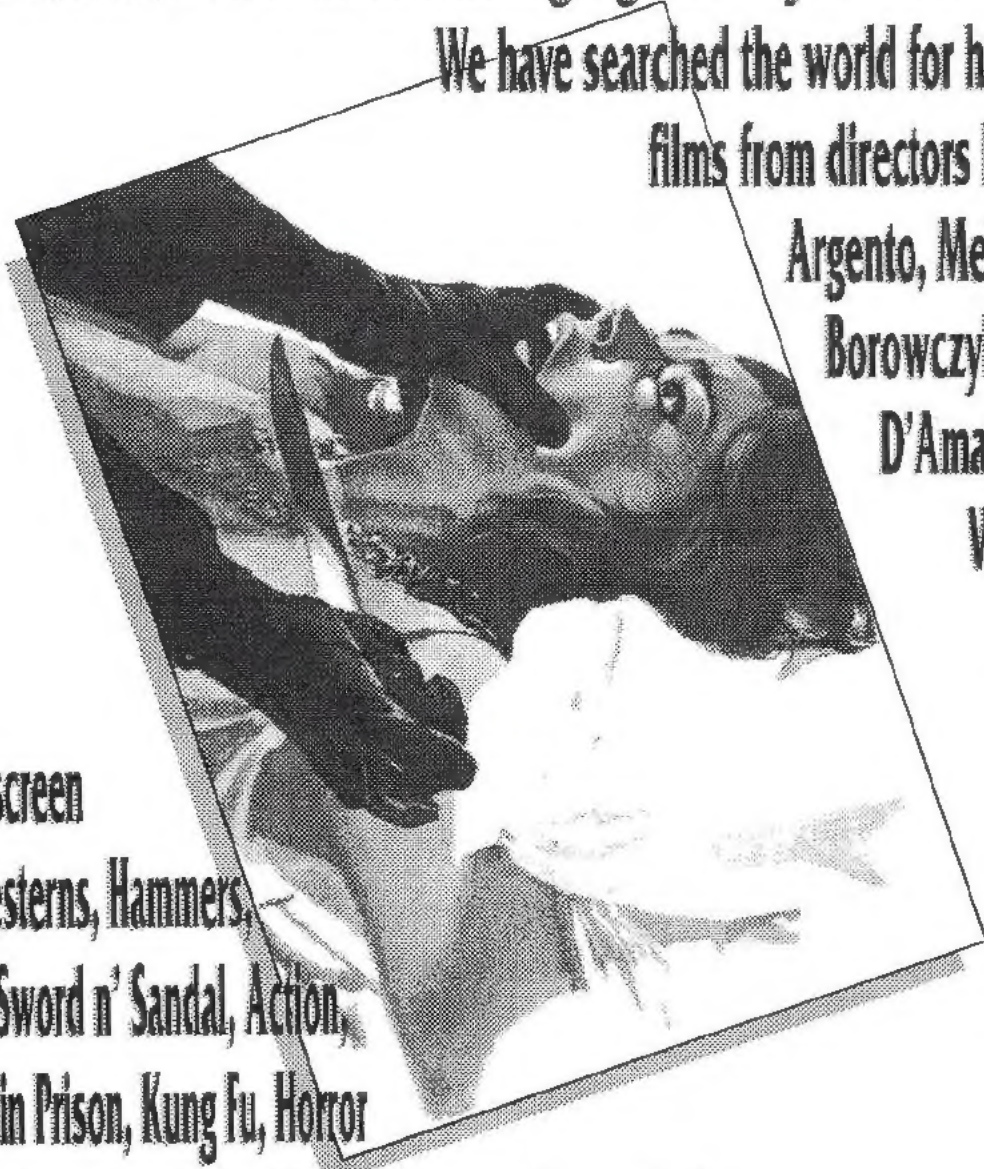


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PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Richard Valley

MANAGING EDITOR
Tom Amorosi

ADVERTISING INFORMATION
(201) 445-0034 / Fax (201) 445-1496

ART DIRECTOR
John E. Payne

COPY EDITOR
Alvin H. Marill

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Dan Clayton

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR
Forrest J Ackerman

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION
(201) 445-0034 / Fax (201) 445-1496

E-mail—reditor@aol.com

STAFF WRITERS

John Brunas, Michael Brunas, Ross Care, David Stuart Davies, Tony Earnshaw, Lelia Loban, Bob Madison, John J. Mathews (The News Hound), Richard Scrivani, Kevin G. Shinnick, Drew Sullivan

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Edmund G. Bansak, Deborah Del Vecchio, Roger Hurlburt, Gregory William Mank, Danny Savello, Jeff Siegel

CONTRIBUTING ARTIST
Mary Payne

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Chester A. Fasulo

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Elinor Bernstein

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Lukas Kendall, John Parnum,



SPECIAL THANKS

Mary Amorosi, Ted Bohus, Ronald V. Borst, Harriet Brand, Chris Carter, Columbia House, Sara Karloff, Bruce Kimmel, Marc Lawrence, Nicholas Lea, Sheldon Leonard, Robert Milite, Ann Palladino, Toni Palladino, Phyl Valley



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COVER: Boris Karloff in *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* (1932), *GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS* (© 1956 Godzilla Releasing Co.)

Scarlet Letters

Just a note of thanks for the swell piece on the Sherlock Holmes CD. (*Scarlet Street* #23) The reaction to the disc has ranged from total adoration to utter revulsion, which I say is all to the good. The purists, of course, are unhappy that every note isn't off the original orchestration and that we didn't use an orchestra of hundreds. Well, that's not what the album was designed to be, but thank goodness the Holmesophiles do understand what it was designed to be and seem to be happy with it. So there.

On to other matters. I've been reading the last few issues with no little amazement regarding the "hidden agenda" of *Scarlet Street*. I'm glad you folks seem to have a sense of humor about such nonsense. And I'm glad to see that the cover of the current issue has photos that clearly relate to the "controversy." Just look at the photo of Bela Lugosi, who is obviously thinking, "Agenda? Vat agenda?" And how about Irish McCalla, whose expression seems to be saying, "If there's an agenda I may as well put this towel around me, because who'll care???" King Kong? Well, we all know he has an agenda. And Chris Atkins? You may as well just caption that photo, "What, me worry?" Why don't you people just admit there's an agenda and be done with it? I mean, you've gone to slick paper, for God's sake, and we all know what that means! And what about the still from UNKNOWN ISLAND on page 51? You tell me!

Seriously, it seems to me that *Scarlet Street* does have an agenda, and a blatant and obvious one at that: to produce the best genre magazine around! And you know what? You do! So a big thanks and keep up the great work.

Bruce Kimmel
Vice President/Producer
Varese Sarabande Records
Studio City, CA

Although I usually like to read a publication cover to cover before I make any comments, I

couldn't help feeling a bit, well, put off isn't quite the word—dissatisfied, I suppose—with #23. It all begins with the cover: two cheesecake photos bookending King Kong.

Personally, I find this subject matter inappropriate. Certainly not in a prudish way—I've written and directed a number of so-called "erotic thrillers," which contain far more graphic representations of sexuality than the stuff you've printed.

Now I certainly realize that after decades of (somewhat related) genre magazines devoted to Betty Page, femme fatales, and the like, that the gay culture may feel that a little male beefcake is only fair. Understandable, but still, wholly unbefitting for *Scarlet Street*.

Frankly, I don't care if your editorial board likes pictures of post-pubescent boys in skimpy loincloths or young ladies wrapped in towels! I



don't care who is gay or straight, or whatever activities took place in their bedrooms!

I subscribed because *Scarlet Street* appeared to be interested in discussing, analyzing, and digging up valuable behind-the-scenes information on my favorite mystery and horror films. Period.

You've brought me many hours of pleasurable reading when you stick to the topic(s) and to that end I commend you. It's really undignified for such a fine publication to be pandering to another market—not to film buffs. They're an unnecessary distraction and a waste of valuable editorial space.

Thanks for listening.

Steven Austin

Van Nuys CA

Always happy to listen. By the way, our female readers, of which we have many, also think a little male beefcake is only fair.

□

As usual, I thought the current issue of *Scarlet Street* was excellent. Unlike any other magazine, I find myself reading articles that I initially think I'll have no interest in—e.g. the Chris Atkins and Randal Kleiser interviews—but find them interesting and enlightening.

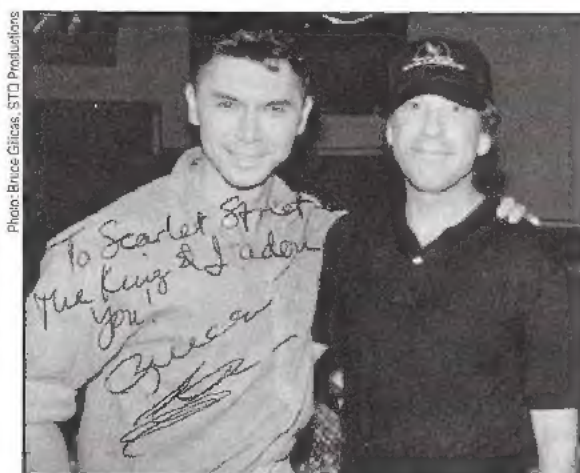
The laserdisc reviews were welcome and long overdue. Although I don't agree 100% with all of them, they are thought-provoking and well written.

THE CHILDREN OF KONG was an excellent overview of films—good or bad—that helped make me what I am today.

I had a feeling the Tarzan franchise was not dead, and I'm happy we will have a new series. That Joe Lara seems right for the part!

Also enjoyed JUNGLE GEMS and the other articles. And leave it to pal Richard Scrivani to dredge

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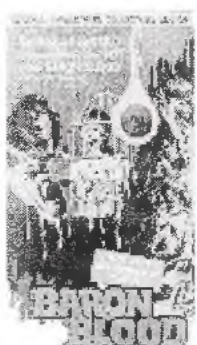
Bruce Kimmel, pictured with Lou Diamond Phillips at the recording session for THE KING AND I.

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Gosh! Wow! Boy, oh boy! *Scarlet Street* has taken a quantum jump into the lead among imagi-movie magazines!

—Forrest J Ackerman

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—Rex Reed

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Stamps of Approval

A Letter of Appreciation from Sara Karloff

The families of Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, Lon Chaney Jr., and Boris Karloff want to thank all of you who helped us with our stamp effort. Without the support and help from thousands and thousands of people all over the country, we could never have been successful. We received thousands of wonderful letters ourselves from people who had seen and enjoyed these men's films. Hundreds of others wrote directly to the Post

Office in Washington. With your help some 15,000 signatures were gathered for us by fans from far and near. It was a most gratifying experience for us all.

As most of you know, on October 31 the Post Office announced its selection and unveiled the stamp art at Universal Studios Florida. There will be a set of five stamps honoring these men for their unique contributions to cinema history.

It is our understanding that the stamps will be issued in early October 1997 at Universal Studios California. It will be a precious moment for each of the families, and one we gladly share with you, these fans of the Legends of Horror.

One last note of thanks should go to the U.S. Post Office. From the start they have been marvelous to work with. They have been both courteous and considerate to the families, and have kept us well informed throughout the entire process.

Thank you all once again.

Gratefully,
Sara Karloff



SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

up THE MAD DOCTOR OF MARKET STREET. I had to view it after reading about it!!!! In fact, that film took the place of my beloved Mummy films that night . . .

John Morgan
Tarzana, CA

Hate to nitpick, but a bunch of errors cropped up in the otherwise excellent RAY HARRYHAUSEN and CHILDREN OF KONG articles in issue #23 that need correction.

In MIGHTY JOE YOUNG, a four-inch model of Joe was used for long shots, not a 13-inch one. Ray Harryhausen, who has been overseeing my forthcoming book *The Making of Mighty Joe Young*, was misquoted. Little Joe was used for two setups: the wide scene of the tug of war and the long shots of Joe climbing the tree, which Marcel Delgado actually animated. "George Locklin" was George Lofgren, a studio taxidermist who not only created Joe's fur from rubberized calf hide, but also did the skins for the octopus, the Cyclops, and SINBAD's serpent woman.

Writer Ed Bansak did a passionate job expressing his dino-film nostal-

gia. The Helstrom character was misspelled, though he did wind up in Hell. (When I worked for Gene Warren Sr. on a Pillsbury commercial in 1978, I recall spotting a strange-looking dragon in the studio, which to my amazement turned out to be the articulated sea serpent head and neck used for one stop-motion shot in SON OF KONG.) "Don Taylor's ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.?" Surely Bansak meant Don Chaffey. Ellis Burman, father of makeup artist Tom Burman, created the two UNKNOWN ISLAND "tyrannosaurs." Optical man Howard Anderson multiplied them into a horde with split screens. (I recently found a real gem on UNKNOWN ISLAND's music cue sheet: "The Tarnowski Shuffle," credited to Ralph Stanley, a pseudonym for music supervisor Raoul Kraushaar, who didn't write a note!)

I don't know anyone who can unflinchingly share Bansak's charitable comments on LOST CONTINENT's "second-rate animation." I wouldn't even call it animation; it was random push and click, executed by God knows who. Ray Harryhausen told me that he and Bradbury went to cheapskate pro-

ducer Robert Lippert in 1951 with an offer to script and animate LOST CONTINENT. Lippert offered a dime on the dollar and the two Rays walked from the project.

I've never heard the roller coaster finale of BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS described as a letdown before. Like the blazing finish of JOE YOUNG, it was special-effects filmmaking at its best. I thought Paul Christian made a uniquely engaging hero, with his hammered enthusiasm and continental flourishes. Compare him to the lackluster American leads of the day. As for the picture "biding its time" with hospital and museum scenes: this buildup seemed to work for it, not against it. There were memorable characters in those scenes (Jacob the seaman, the crusty French skipper) and director/designer Eugene Lourie gave those small sets at General Service Studio a nice noir look, with Venetian blinds and artful lighting. I always enjoy "With a Song in My Heart" droning on the radio during the ennui of Christian and Paula Raymond thumbing through dinosaur drawings—scenes that could

Continued on page 12

Frankly Scarlet

Well, Scarlet Streeters, it's time for yet another slam-bang anniversary edition of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*. Let's start off with a few news items, penned in a style familiar, perhaps, to fans of a certain 1974 TV program.

Item: On Election Day, November 5, 1996, Jessie Marie Lilley elected to leave her position as publisher of *Scarlet Street* to pursue work in other avenues.

Item: Less than a minute later, a former reporter, film critic, playwright, comic-book writer, and bottle washer named Richard Valley took the publishing reigns while vowing to continue in his post as editor-in-chief of *Scarlet Street*.

Item: With the rest of its ruby-red staff intact and eager to scale new heights of horror, *Scarlet Street* #24 immediately went into production with the mind-boggling lineup of articles and interviews—including the latest update on a certain Carl Kolchak, newshawk for the Independent News Service in Chicago—you hold in your monstrous mitts this very moment.

You lucky people, you . . .

And if you think this edition holds some fab goodies (and equally fab baddies, including master menaces Sheldon Leonard and Marc Lawrence), then get ready for the incredible issues to come, when *Scarlet Street* proudly presents:

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, complete with interviews with stars Patricia Neal and Billy Gray, and legendary director Robert Wise . . .

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We've said it before and we'll say it again: stick around, gang, 'cause the beast is yet to come!



This past holiday season was darkened considerably by the deaths of two relatives of members of the *Scarlet Street* family. Editorial secretary Elinor Bernstein lost her mother, Anne, on November 27th. A little less than two weeks later, on December 10th, my aunt and godmother, Anna McGoe, passed away.

Anna Bernstein and her husband, Dan, were enthusiastic supporters of *Scarlet Street* from the very beginning. When we were just starting out, and had little going for us but enthusiasm, we needed all the help we could get. The Bernsteins were there for us more than once.

My Aunt Anna was one of our first readers, back when our subscription list was purely relative. More meaningful to me, personally, though, was the fact that, through one of her sons, she was indirectly responsible for my lifelong love of horror movies . . . and thus a true founder of *The Magazine of Mystery and Horror*.

Anna's kids, my cousins Eddie and Andrew, are just a few years older than me, and back in the '50s and '60s we were often thrown together. (Actually, I was the one who was often thrown; our reunions could get pretty rough.)

I was just nine when, on a hot summer's day, while we waited for a ride home from the community swimming pool, Andrew (pictured

above with guess who on swings) first mentioned the strange, chilling names of a popular local television show and its Cool Ghoul of a host. The show, of course, was SHOCK THEATER; its host, the one and only Zacherley.

Now, I looked up to my cousin (I was usually on the floor), so I was intrigued, excited, and just a trifle wary. The reason was simple: I had never seen a horror movie . . . well, not more than five or six seconds of one, anyway. Some years earlier, I'd walked into a room and discovered King Kong peering out at me from the TV screen. As a result of that brief encounter, I developed a profound fear of gorillas, the horror movies in which I thought they invariably resided, and—thanks to a later run-in with the ample ape in AFRICA SCREAMS—Bud Abbott and Lou Costello.

By the time I got around to watching Zacherley, he'd moved on from SHOCK THEATER to New York's WOR Channel Nine, where the movies weren't the best but Zach was in top form. Nevertheless, I'd taken the plunge and soon found myself splashing merrily along with THE MUMMY'S GHOST (my first beginning-to-end fright flick, with Mom and Dad hovering protectively by my side), BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE WOLF MAN, and, yes, KING KONG!

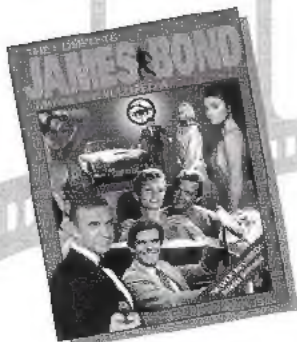
When I harken back to those heady days of the late '50s Monster Boom, the people who always come immediately to mind are my parents, my cousins, and—just a little further in the background—my Aunt Anna.

When *Scarlet Street* was only one issue old, we learned that my father was terminally ill. During his last months, Anna was often at our home to help and lend support. Shortly before my aunt's death, my mother thanked her for always being there when she was needed, from the very beginning when they were kids. "Well," my aunt said, "you were always there for me, too." With that in mind, I dedicate this issue to those whose love and loyalty often goes unmentioned till it's nearly too late, those who stay the course, those who are always there when they're needed and never let you down. Elinor Bernstein knows the kind of person I'm talking about.

I do, too . . .

Richard Valley

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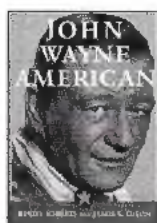
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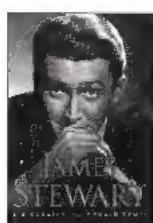
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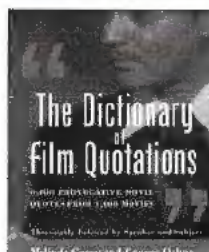
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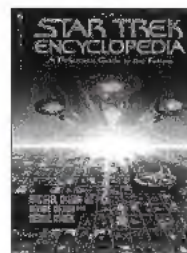
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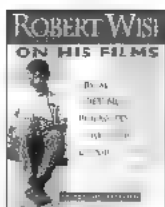
Yes, at age 19 Sean Connery modeled for the Edinburgh Art College. Although he won an Oscar for his role in *The Untouchables*, Connery is best known for his Bond role. To learn more about Connery, read *The Complete James Bond Movie Encyclopedia* available through the **Movie & Entertainment Book Club**.

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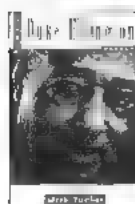
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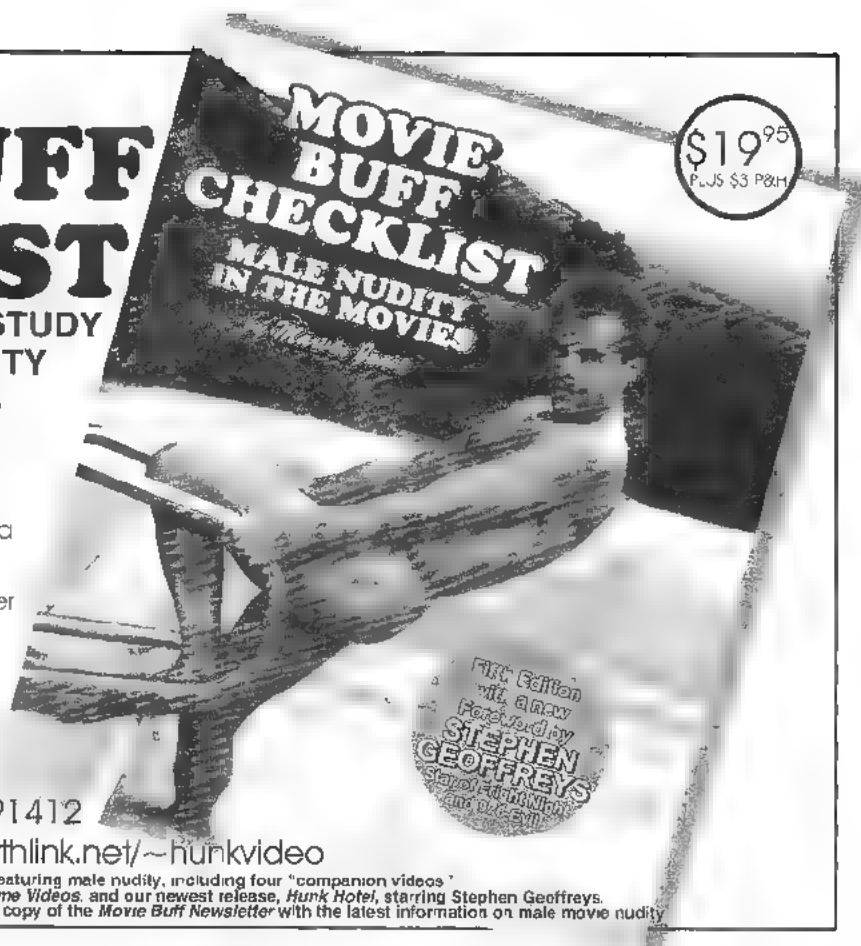
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SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

have been riddled by lame dialogue, but weren't. Not a perfect film, but pretty damned good for a first-time director. For the record, the roller-coaster fire was Harryhausen's idea. It worked like a charm, and it wasn't easy.

Several items I supplied to my PLAN 9 reprint didn't get placed. The Danziger Brothers were responsible for tracking Trevor Duncan's stately "Grand Vista" into FIRE MAIDENS OF OUTER SPACE, not Cy Roth. The Danzigers, Edward and Harry, were American producers who set up Elstree Studios in England and spent 15 years making hundreds of second features and TV episodes hardly worth mentioning. And if anyone ever wondered where the music in GLEN OR GLENDA? came from: it was written by Bill Lava for the Dr. Christian movies at RKO in the '40s and slugged into GLEN by Raoul Kraushaar under a phony name. The schmaltzy theme was called "The Country Doctor" and became the title music for the LASSIE show in 1954, again via Kraushaar.

Scarlet Street is slick, choice paper, crisp photo repro, a sense of art di-

rection, and imaginative use of typography. Spring for a color section and you'll really have something. Keep up the good work.

Paul Mandell
New York, NY

Thanks, Paul, for teaching us a few things—including never to trust a Kraushaar with a phony name!

Apropos Forrest J Ackerman's query in a recent issue of *Scarlet Street*: Sari Maritza died in 1987. Very few remember her as one of many European actresses brought to Hollywood in the wake of the success of both Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich.

And who remembers Franciska Gaal and Ilona Massey, both from Hungary, plus Sigrid Gurie, a Brooklyn-born Norwegian? Alas, all the above are deceased.

Syd Goldberg
Upper Darby, PA

Gone but not entirely forgotten, Syd—no Universal horror fanatic will ever forget lovely Ilona Massey in INVISIBLE AGENT and FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN.

Scarlet Street never fails to fascinate. I picked up #23 for the Chris Atkins interview, and as usual found

the whole magazine crammed with items of interest.

Edward Hardwicke's comment about hearing Basil Rathbone's voice in his head while doing audio tape versions of the Holmes stories reminded me of all the tapes I'd picked up in the last year or so. Possibly the earliest "book on tape" versions were by Rathbone. The first two, "The Speckled Band" and "The Final Problem," were done in 1963 and had the singular distinction of having Rathbone narrate the stories as Dr. Watson, as they were written. Having used his own voice on these, the later stories "The Redheaded League," "A Scandal in Bohemia," and "Silver Blaze" (1966-67) instead had Rathbone use a variety of voices and accents. In fact, while he only used his own voice as Holmes in these, he chose to do a Nigel Bruce impression (an eerily accurate one, in fact) for Watson!

Later, Christopher Lee used a wide variety of voices and accents narrating "The Valley of Fear" (1991), also using his own voice only as narrator—and a somewhat sprightlier version of it as Holmes. Perhaps Hardwicke should be teamed with Lee on future audio versions, as Lee is one of the few well-known and respected

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Holmes of late still around. (Or they could go for Ian Richardson, whose two upscale Holmes films are among the finest of the last 15 years—a series cut short, I suspect, only due to the appearance of Jeremy Brett's.)

After being dismayed by the last Tarzan TV series a few years ago, I mistakenly believed the current one was a continuation of that. I knew I'd heard of Joe Lara, but it totally slipped my mind that he was in *TARZAN IN MANHATTAN*, which I recall as a fun TV movie. Apart from *TARZAN, THE APE MAN* (1932), it seems that most films and shows about the jungle hero have been pretty devoid of any real "fantasy adventure" feeling. I guess the exotic locations of *TARZAN GOES TO INDIA*, *TARZAN'S THREE CHALLENGES*, and *TARZAN AND THE VALLEY OF GOLD* (made back-to-back in the '60s) helped make those entries among the most popular ever made, but Weissmuller's first is the only one I'd happily put on the same level with *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* for its action-epic feel. Wonder what took so many filmmakers so long? (I keep getting arguments on this, but I feel in many ways the last five years is the best

era adventure TV has seen since the mid '60s.)

I'd like to request you do an article on the music used in the 1967-69 *SPIDER-MAN* cartoons. It's never (to my knowledge) been available, and remains among my favorite sound track music from that period. There were at least two distinct "catalogs" used, between the Grantray/Lawrence first season and the Ralph Bakshi/Krantz Films second and third. Happy hunting! (I know some of it was stock music, as I've heard at least one cue used in an episode of Quinn Martin's *THE UNTOUCHABLES* a few years earlier!)

Henry R. Kujawa
Camden, NJ

Is there a gay agenda at *Scarlet Street*? Is the Pope Catholic? Frankly, I'm tired of reading about the debate in the letters section, so please stop printing any more about it, including this letter if that makes any sense.

The rest of the issue was great, especially *THE CHILDREN OF KONG*. Mr. Bansak was entirely too kind to *UNKNOWN ISLAND*. The sight of those T. Rexes wobbling about the trees is truly mind warping.

Since we are speaking of the truly awful, how come there was no mention of *KING DINOSAUR*? Not content with a ludicrous plot, bad dialogue, beyond wooden acting, and those oh-so-special Bert I. Gordon effects, the conclusion has the characters bringing civilization to this new planet by setting off an atomic bomb!

I'm looking forward to Part Two.
Mark Everett
San Mateo, CA

We're sorry we couldn't accommodate you by not printing your letter, Mark, but the "agenda" letters were simply too numerous (and occasionally too "mind warping") to ignore. Hey, maybe next time. Meanwhile, warp speed...!

I like your magazine very much and have kept an open mind toward your increasingly strident gay agenda, but the Campfire Video ad in issue 23 gave me the creeps. At the same time, I admit that an identical ad featuring naked women wouldn't bother me in the least. I'm not sure what my point is, but I was driven to say something.

Vic Stanley
The Monolithic Press
Chicago, IL

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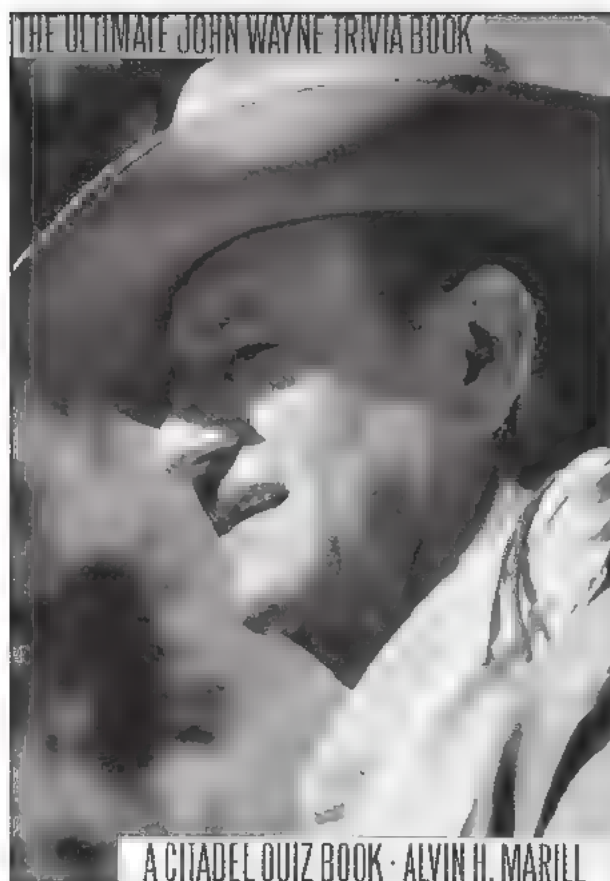
- In what film did he kiss Walter Brennan?
- In barroom style brawls, he slugged it out with Randolph Scott in what two movies?
- He put what two leading ladies over his knee for good spankings in two consecutive movies. Name the films and the recipients of his open palm
- True or false: On the screen, Wayne fought in every American war
- Name the only Wayne movie which was made into a Broadway musical
- Duke dueted with his leading lady in Gilbert and Sullivan in what film?

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Thanks again for the work you do—important historical work that attempts to excavate the meanings of American popular culture. Very important among this sort of archeology is the work that Boze Hadleigh does—interviews with and about lesbian, gay, and bisexual Hollywood personalities. His books reveal important pieces of the historical record that Hollywood PR agents have attempted to eradicate in the name of heterosexist bias. If anything, the comments from Anne Baxter about Vincent Price have confirmed what I have always suspected about my favorite horror film actor. And, as you so eloquently assert, this information is in no way derogatory (to anyone, that is, but a confirmed homophobe). Rather, it perhaps explains why even as a child I was fascinated with the star persona of Vincent Price!

A note on gay politics to Dick Klemensen, who found my previous letter on the subject of monsters and queers "a bit harsh." I teach film at the University of California and perhaps my "academese" was too strong. Nonetheless, I don't know of too many people who wouldn't acknowledge that straight white male patriarchal ideology has (and contin-

ues) to oppress people the world over. From religious wars to everyday life, harassment and crime are often understood as "acceptable" aspects of male domination. Popular culture in general still reflects these messages, and the horror film continues to be an important ideological tool in disseminating the message that queerness is scary and evil.

The closet mentality, both socially and individually, also works to reinforce the idea that homosexuality is a dirty little secret that is best kept hidden away—Oscar Wilde understood that 100 years ago when he wrote an allegory of queerness and the closet entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Queers today are saying they are tired of being tyrannized by such a social construct, and are working to rectify the situation by coming out and actually discussing queer lives and queer issues in the mainstream media. The work of *Scarlet Street*, Boze Hadleigh, and others is helping to create a more honest and open world where love is accepted as a saving force and where bias and ignorance are revealed as the true enemies of humankind. Long live *Scarlet Street*!

Harry M. Benshoff
Los Angeles, CA
benshoff@cats.ucsc.edu

No subject tackled by *Scarlet Street* has given rise to as much debate as the "gay agenda" issue . . . which is not even an issue for us, but simply a matter of broaching a subject seldom addressed in the "betty pages" of most genre publications. While we're flattered by Mr. Benshoff's remarks, we feel that he credited us too much. For example, when we set about researching our piece on the filming of *TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE* (#10), we'd no idea that the film's creator, Tom Graeff, was gay, or that the film's star, David Love (often misidentified as Graeff), was Graeff's lover. Having uncovered the truth, it seemed only logical to print it . . . just as, in running an unfettered interview with Anne Baxter, it seemed sensible to refrain from fettering it. As we've said before, the fact that many of the people covered in *Scarlet Street* are gay—be they such faces from the past as James Whale or such faces from the present as Clive Barker—makes it inevitable that the subject will come up (and out) from time to time. It might even engender a better understanding of the films and personalities we love so well.

Thanks for the article on David Schecter and Kathleen Mayne. (*Scarlet Street* #22). These two have done a first class job with their two MONSTROUS MOVIE MUSIC CDs and

therefore deserve all of the publicity they can get. I selfishly wish them great success, knowing there will be more music to come

I can also wholeheartedly recommend Joel McNeely's *VERTIGO* and *FAHRENHEIT 451* CDs, both very faithful to the originals. The latter contains an absolutely beautiful cut from *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR* that was not included on the Elmer Bernstein CD.

I just wish the folks at Silva Screen would get their act together. The music they put out is generally sluggish, suggesting that their orchestras don't have a lot of rehearsal time, if any. Fortunately, we have the wonderful work of John Morgan (who promises that *KING KONG* and Alfred Newman's *HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* are in the works) to balance things out.

Mark McGee
Duarte, CA

We agree completely with your praise of *MONSTROUS MOVIE MUSIC*, Mark, and John Morgan's exemplary work, but we're also very high on the Silva Screen CDs you find sluggish. For our pesos, *HORROR!* and *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT: MUSIC FOR HAMMER*

FILMS COMPOSED BY JAMES BERNARD are two of the best of the recent rush of film music recordings.

I inadvertently let my subscription lapse and didn't realize it until #23 hit the stands. My goof, and I hope easily corrected.

I was surprised that I never received an expiration notice, which is the sort of thing I rely on to remind me that the fun is coming to an end. However, lots of magazines overdo it, sending me resubscription pleas shortly after my subscription has begun. The problem, perhaps, is that you folks are too damn polite. Pester me a little next time. I love the magazine and I'll pay up if I'm reminded.

Thanks for putting out such a fine magazine. I'm looking forward to another year's worth of *Scarlet Street*.

Richard Chwedyk
Chicago, IL

With the proliferation of genre mags, it must be difficult to continually place first on horror fans' buying list. Nevertheless, *Scarlet Street* does just that. No matter that a film has been covered in every other

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the NEWS HOUND

It's another year of fear in The News Hound's den. Before winter hibernation kicked in The Hound forwarded the following fearsome factoids . . .

Kolchak Stalks Again

Grab your crosses and straw hats—a brand new version of THE NIGHT STALKER is heading for the big screen. The original telefilm was a huge success back in 1972 and is still the fifth highest rated TV movie ever. Dan Curtis, producer of the original, directs the new Morgan Creek production this spring. Curtis collaborated on the screenplay with Steve Feke, his producing partner on the 1991 DARK SHADOWS revival series on ABC. No word yet on what Darren McGavin thinks of all this.

Irwin Allen Redux

The battle of the volcano movies began in February, when DANTE'S PEAK (Universal) spewed forth onto cinema screens. Pierce Brosnan and Linda Hamilton leap over lava at the direction of Roger Donaldson (SPECIES). Before the close of the year, VOLCANO (Fox 2000) erupts, taking with it most of Los Angeles and whatever money remains in disaster movie fans' pockets. (Not much, we reckon). Tommy Lee Jones and Anne Heche dodge the rubble in this one. A third volcanic movie RING OF FIRE, was threatened by Touchstone at one time, but luckily we've been spared.

Also bubbling forth in February are THE EIGHTH DAY (Columbia) a sci-fi drama starring Ethan Hawke and Uma Thurman, and LOST HIGHWAY (October Films), which returns director David Lynch to most bizarre form. Lynch directs former ID4 president Bill Pullman and a barely-recognizable Robert "Baretta" Blake in this tale of murder and murk.

More Theatrical Thrills

MIMIC (Dimension), described by its producers as "a nature-out-of-balance story in the vein of THE BIRDS," arrives in theaters in March

from CRONOS director Guillermo del Toro; Mira Sorvino and Giancarlo Giannini star. Also in March, Val Kilmer portrays Simon Templar as a gadget-laden master of disguise in Paramount's THE SAINT. No bows to tradition here—even the classic halo-headed stick figure logo has been chucked. Saints preserve us

Spy stuff continues in April with DOUBLE TEAM (Sony) starring Jean-Claude Van Damme as a muscular secret agent who tries to escape



His name in the title and a hot love scene with Poison Ivy (perhaps to kill those naughty rumors about the Dynamic Duo)—what more could a Boy Wonder want? (Nipples, maybe?) Chris O'Donnell returns this summer in BATMAN AND ROBIN.

an island colony where he and fellow retired spies are incarcerated. Patrick McGeehan should sue. Spy spoof AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY (New Line) also sneaks onto screens in April; SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE alumnus Mike Myers wrote, coproduced, and hired Elizabeth Hurley as his costar. No mystery there.

The Long, Hot Sci-Fi Summer

More digital dinosaurs lumber on the horizon as Steven Spielberg's THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK (Universal) premieres on Memorial Day weekend. Returnees not eaten in the original film include Jeff Goldblum and Richard Attenborough . . . The megabudget futuristic fantasy THE FIFTH ELEMENT (Columbia) also arrives in May, with Bruce Willis reportedly playing a 24th-century New York City cabbie battling an evil cosmic force. (The Taxi and Limousine Commission?) Gary Oldman and Ian Holm costar . . . Not so-itsy bitsy spiders get blown to galactic kingdom by STARSHIP TROOPERS (TriStar), orbiting theaters this July . . . Astronomer Jodie Foster makes CONTACT with an alien signal in the July Warner Bros. release based on Carl Sagan's novel . . . CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (Columbia) is rumored to be getting a big 20th-anniversary rerelease this summer. Keep watching the skies.

Doing It by the (Comic) Book

Two major features based on comic book characters will debut in June. The first, needless to say, is BATMAN AND ROBIN (Warner Bros.) from director Joel (BATMAN FOREVER) Schumacher and producer Peter (FIRE MAIDENS OF OUTER SPACE) Macgregor-Scott. The other is MEN IN BLACK (Columbia), based on the Malibu Comics series by Lowell Cunningham. Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones star as Jay and Kay, secret government operatives who investigate alien visitations. Linda Fiorentino costars, Barry Sonnenfeld (THE ADDAMS FAMILY) directs, and makeup master Rick Baker provides the aliens.

Oscar-winning effects designer John Bruno (T2, THE ABYSS) makes his directing debut on VIRUS, now shooting for Universal. Based on Chuck Pfarrer's Dark Horse graphic novel, it stars Jamie Lee Curtis as a member of a boat's crew stalked by

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NICHOLAS LEA

interviewed by Danny Savello

As double dealing agent Alex Krychek, handsome Nicholas Lea has become one of a select band of recurring X-FILES characters whose appearances are eagerly awaited by hard-core fans of the show. Lea first showed up in the episode "Gender Bender" not as Mulder and Scully's nemesis but as a horny young man involved in a threesome -with only one other person. That landed him the role of sly, conniving Krychek, who began his treacherous career as Cancer Man's strong right arm and most recently lost an arm in Russia. *Scarlet Street* recently tracked down the elusive Krychek and the not-so-elusive Mr. Lea for this exclusive interview . . .

Scarlet Street: You didn't originally plan to be an actor.

Nicholas Lea: Well, let's put it this way: I'd always wanted to be an actor, but it took me a long time to get there. I was in art school for two years, and I sang in a band for about five. Then I met an acting coach, I quit my job the next day, and I started studying. But I'd always been in love with actors and actresses and movies. My friends would be going out and I'd stay home to watch movies.

SS: Before *THE X-FILES*, were you in any other series?

NL: Yeah, I did about two-and-a-half years recurring on a show called *THE COMMISH*. I've done some fairly low-budget films in Canada and a lot of series stuff. I did *LONESOME DOVE*, I did *SLIDERS* and *HIGHLANDER*.

SS: You actually made your first *X-FILES* appearance as an altogether different character in the "Gender Bender" episode.

NL: Exactly. I did the first episode as a sort of guest star. Rob Bowman, who was directing the show, really liked what I did and, when it came time to cast Krychek, Rob really pushed for me strongly. They saw about 30 guys in Los Angeles and I was the only guy they saw in Vancouver, so it was a great experience for me. It was very nerve-racking, because there was Chris Carter and all the producers. My girlfriend was working out down the

street. I went running down the street to the gym, found her on the second level, and yelled, "I got it!" Everybody turned and stared! It was great! So it was Rob Bowman

who gave me my big break and every time I see him I give him a dollar. (Laughs)

SS: You had to walk a fine line in your "Gender Bender" performance after the alien shifted from female to male in the car. Was it very difficult to convey your character's emotional distress without making him appear homophobic to gay viewers?

NL: You know, that was never an issue to me; I never thought of the homophobic ramifications of it. I suppose some people could say, "The guy freaked out because he thought it was a man." But, he didn't freak out because he's making out with a girl and then found out it's a guy; he freaked out because she changed directly in front of him. It was also an interesting angle, that the guy was so very macho and then he's lying in a hospital bed scared out of his life. Really, it was more important to me to play a guy who's terrified. I try to be responsible about the things I do, so that I don't have to worry about choices—are they right or wrong, are they gonna offend anybody? It's actually one of the scenes I'm most proud of that I've done.

SS: At the beginning, we knew very little about Alex Krychek's background. Did you create one for him?

NL: Yes, I did. They're such great writers that there's not a lot of work. What I tried to inject into it was the guy is young and in way over his head. I made the decision that he came from a military background, his father was in the military and he was trying very, very hard to fill up some big shoes. I can draw on my own life about my relationship with my own father, and how you're constantly trying to live up to somebody's image of

INSIDE THE X FILES



what they think you should be. Krychek doesn't know he's being bad; he's just trying to get ahead and trying to please all those people in his past. He's just doing what he's doing to survive.

SS: Do you have a favorite Krychek moment?

NL: There's a scene in "Ascension," where Mulder is going up the tram and Krychek tries to kill him. The way it was originally written was that I bring up my gun and whack the tram operator. You see the guy get knocked over instantly and the camera cuts to the gondola. What I decided to do was whack him and then shake it off and fix my hair a little bit. I thought it would say something about Krychek, that he was trying to keep himself together and that he was very cool. They kept it in and I was really happy about that. It tells me that my instincts are right.

SS: You've gotten some fairly unflattering nicknames from fans—in particular, *Rat Boy*.

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Nicholas Lea has become so well known by the name X-Philes have christened him—Rat Boy—that he'd be Hollywood's top choice should they ever decide to remake WILLARD.

NICHOLAS LEA

Continued from page 19

NL: Oh, well, I think it's great, actually—although I must say, it's a little daunting still being called "boy" at 33. But it means people are watching it and enjoying it and that's the important thing. Dave Duchovny is Special K.

SS: At least the name hasn't turned up in the show itself. Speaking of cast members with memorable nicknames, what is it like working with William Davis, who is better known to devoted X-Philes as Cancer Man?

NL: Bill is a great guy. He's so different than you see him on television. He's extremely soft spoken and really very funny, actually. Everybody's great. I've been spending a lot of

time with Mitch Pileggi because we went over to England to do some promotion for the show. We've become friends since the show started, anyway, but now we get to travel and do all these great things together. It's a real treat. Doing an episode is like going home to see your family, because now I live in

Los Angeles and whenever I go back to do the show I get to go to my hometown and see my friends.

SS: So then, who says you can't go home again?

NL: And it's not just my friends. I really look forward to seeing David and Gillian and the producers and crew; it's a real treat and it's just fun. As an actor, you hope you can work on a show that you're proud of, so I'm really fortunate that I'm involved in THE X-FILES.

SS: The inevitable question about life on other planets: do you believe that we are not alone?

NL: Oh, yes, absolutely! I think it would be egotistical to believe that there isn't more intelligent life out there. I like to believe it, because it gives me some hope as well. Things aren't exactly going swimmingly well on this planet. So it would be nice to know there's something out there.

SS: Can you tell us what's in store for Krychek or would Carter have your head—that is, in addition to already taking one of your arms?

NL: Carter would have my head! (Laughs)

NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 18

an alien exterminator. He's out to kill that pesky virus known as humankind. Donald Sutherland and Billy Baldwin are along for the cruise BLADE, featuring the vampire-slaying Marvel Comics character, is currently rolling for New Line Cinema. Wesley Snipes stars as the vampire-mortal hybrid hero, and Stephen Dorff is due to play Frost, his nemesis. Marvel man Stan Lee and actor Snipes are coproducers of the flick. Look for both of these features to premiere by year's end.

And stay tuned for word on another Marvel movie in development—Nicolas Cage may play Tony Stark (the coolest cat with the hottest steel) in a new 20th Century Fox production of IRON MAN.

Future Features

More films on the fast track to your local megaplex: FALLEN (New Line) stars Denzel Washington and John Goodman as cops on the trail of a killer who turns out to be a "fallen angel" (i.e., the big red guy with the horns and pitchfork) . . . Hong Kong director John Woo's FACE OFF (Paramount) stars John Travolta as an

extremely dedicated undercover cop who surgically swaps faces with a terrorist. Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, stayin' alive? . . . Dean Koontz's PHANTOMS (Dimension) features Peter O'Toole and Joanna Going (the former Josette of 1991's DARK SHADOWS) . . . EVENT HORIZON (Paramount), a sci-fi thriller, stars Laurence Fishburne and Sam Neil . . . THE MASK OF ZORRO (TriStar) toplines Antonio Banderas and Anthony Hopkins . . . Robert Altman's THE GINGERBREAD MAN (PolyGram) from John Grisham's novel, stars Kenneth Branagh . . . and Pierce Brosnan returns as James Bond 007 in AVATAR (MGM/UA), costarring Terence Stamp as the villain and SPECIES siren Natasha Henstridge as the window dressing.

Early in the planning stages: novelist Karen Hall has turned her supernatural thriller *Dark Debits* into a screenplay for Paramount. Harrison Ford may star as a sexy exorcist . . . Glenn Close is developing a feature version of MOTHER LOVE, the British miniseries starring Diana Rigg that debuted in the States on public television's MYSTERY! . . . George Clooney may be going from E.R. to BRRR—he's in talks to play a dead-

beat dad who dies and returns as a snowman in the Warner Bros. fea-

Continued on page 22

Mona and Mouse will be back in MORE TALES OF THE CITY, but it's unknown at this time whether Chloe Webb and Marcus D'Amico will play them.



The Night Stalker Tapes

by Richard Valley

Carl Kolchak rides again! Thanks in large part to the phenomenal success of THE X-FILES, which owes much of its inspiration to THE NIGHT STALKER and has focused attention on its cult fave forerunner, this is shaping up to be Carl's year. A NIGHT STALKER feature film is in the works from Dan Curtis Productions. The original NIGHT STALKER Movie of the Week recently made its laser disc debut. New Kolchak novels are waiting in the wings for a wise publisher to pick up the rights. A Kolchak comic is promised. But the big news, as enthusiastically reported in *Scarlet Street* #23, is that Columbia House, under its new Re-TV Video Library banner, is re-releasing the complete series of KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER television shows, starring Darren McGavin as Kolchak, Simon Oakland as Tony Vincenzo, Jack Grinnage as Ron Updyke, Carol Ann Susi as Monique Marmelstein, and Ruth McDevitt as Miss Emily Cowles. The first two tapes (with two digitally mastered episodes apiece and liner notes by Kolchak expert Mark Dawidziac) have already found their way into the eager claws of Stalkerites, with a new tape due monthly until all 20 programs have been made available. (No word yet on whether Re-TV will release the original telefilms that inspired the series: 1972's THE NIGHT STALKER and 1973's THE NIGHT STRANGLER.)

The programs are not being released in the order in which they were first broadcast, but have been paired, whenever possible, thematically. Thus the two Native American stories, "Bad Medicine" (originally aired on November 29, 1974) and "The Energy Eater" (December 13, 1974), will be double-billed on the fourth tape, and the two sci-fi stories, "They Have Been . . ." (September 27, 1974) and "Mr. R.I.N.G." (January 10, 1975), will turn up on tape number six.

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited tapes in the series will be numbers three, four, and eight, since they contain the quartet of NIGHT STALKER episodes that were never placed in syndication. Instead, the episodes "Fire Fall" (aired November 8, 1974, available on tape eight) and "The Energy Eater" (tape four) were haphazardly combined to create the TV movie CRACKLE OF DOOM, while "Demon in Lace" (February 7, 1975, available on tape three) and "Legacy of Terror" (February 14, 1975, available on tape eight) became DEMON AND THE MUMMY. Re-TV will restore the episodes to their original form, making them legally available for the first time in well over 20 years.

The first Columbia House tape contains two of the finest episodes: "The Ripper" (September 13, 1974) and "The Zombie" (September 20, 1974). The Ripper's Chris-

tian name, needless to say, is Jack, and, in a nod to Robert Bloch's classic tale "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper," he seems to possess eternal life—that is, until he meets up with Carl Kolchak in an electrifying climax. "The Zombie" features what many consider to be the most frightening sequence in the entire series: Kolchak's anxious endeavor, in the back of a junked hearse, to pour salt into the mouth of a sleeping zombie and then sew the creature's lips shut! (The *New York Post*'s David Bianculli, quoted in Mark Dawidziac's excellent *Night Stalking: A 20th Anniversary Kolchak Companion*, remembered: "More than 15 years later, I still feel squeamish thinking about Kolchak crawling through a car graveyard . . . you're watching and watching and then the zombie's eyes opened!")

One of the genuine charms of viewing these classic '70s shows are to meet up once again with TV special guest stars of that much-maligned era. Look for particularly deft turns by John Fiedler (in three episodes as morgue attendant Gordon "Gordy the Ghoul" Spangler), Val Bisoglio ("The Zombie"), James Gregory and Mary Wickes ("They Have Been . . ."), William Daniels ("The Vampire"), Dick Gautier and Nita Talbot ("The Werewolf"), Keenan Wynn (in two episodes as Captain Joe Siska), Jim Backus and Sharon Farrell ("Chopper"), Dwayne Hickman ("The Youth Killer"), Hans Conried ("The Knightly Murders"), and the great Phil Silvers

("Horror in the Heights"). You'll also find such grand old genre veterans as Eric Braeden, John Doucette, Victor Jory, Richard Kiel, Ned Glass, Robert Cornthwaite, Herb Vigran, Julie Adams, Nina Foch, Lara Parker, Richard Bakalyan, Henry Brandon, Jay Robinson, Jesse White, Andrew Prine, Carolyn Jones, Milton Parsons, Kathleen Freeman, and John Hoyt.

With THE X FILES laser disc releases proving to be popular with consumers, it's hoped that Re-TV will see fit to commit KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER to laser. In the meantime, you can sign up for the Kolchak video treatment by calling the Re-TV Video Library at 1 800-638-2922. The first tape sells for \$4.95 plus shipping and handling, with subsequent volumes available at \$19.95 each plus shipping and handling. For more information about KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER and such other TV classics as STAR TREK, THE SAINT, THE OUTER LIMITS, PERRY MASON, COLUMBO, THE UNTOUCHABLES, LOST IN SPACE, SUPERMAN, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, and THE TWILIGHT ZONE, visit the Re-TV website at <http://www.columbiacouse.com>.



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NEWS HOUND

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ture FROSTY from the chilling Sam Rami

Many Hapless Returns

Never shy about recycling, the Disney organization is bringing us new productions of such golden oldies as MIGHTY JOE YOUNG (from TREMORS director Ron Underwood), THE ABSENT MINDED PROFESSOR (with Robin Williams as Fred MacMurray), and live-action versions of '60s TV cartoon staples GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE and MR. MAGOO (starring Leslie Nielsen as Jim Backus' voice). CHINATOWN screenwriter Robert Towne is directing a remake of Alfred Hitchcock's THE 39 STEPS for release late this year from Warner Bros. And TriStar's GODZILLA starts shooting in April for a summer 1998 release. Who says there are no new ideas out there?

A coupla updates: online daily Mr Showbiz reports that Harrison Ford may play the lead in PolyGram's feature version of TV's cult classic THE PRISONER . . . Turner Pictures has aborted the launch of their live-action movie of THE JETSONS Rorry, Rorge

Television Thrills

The long wait is almost over for fans of Armistead Maupin's TALES OF THE CITY. Showtime has picked up the sequel, MORE TALES OF THE CITY, for a six-to-eight part miniseries. Loose plot threads will be tied up neatly and a new, Hitchcockian mystery will intrigue our Bohemian friends on Barbary Lane. No word on casting yet, but filming commences this summer

D'ya love TV themes? Then don't miss out on TELE-VENTURES. THE VENTURES PERFORM THE GRFAT TV THEMES from EMI Records. If you remember their hit recording of HAWAII FIVE O, you'll want to hear that and BATMAN, TWILIGHT ZONE, GREEN HORNET, STAR TREK, and many others (even two Alka Seltzer commercials)

STEPHEN KING'S THE SHINING premieres on ABC this May. The six-hour miniseries was scripted by King and stars Steven Weber and Rebecca De Mornay as the ill-fated Jack and Wendy Torrence . . . Jules Verne's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA also gets the longform treatment from ABC. The lavish production was shot in Australia and stars Michael Caine as Captain Nemo . . . The Sci Fi Channel joins the



Godzilla's back! (Horny li'l thing, ain't it?) The Big G will at last go before the cameras for TriStar's long-planned remark.

miniseries ranks with new productions of BRAVE NEW WORLD and JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, both appearing this spring . . . Chief Inspector Morse returned to PBS's MYSTERY! with two brand-new two-part episodes, "The Way Through the Woods" (January 30 and February 6) and "Deadly Slumber" (February 13 and 20). Encore MORSE episodes run through mid March. CADFAEL, the medieval monk of mystery played by Derek Jacobi, returns in three new productions on MYSTERY! starting March 20

MGM TV is planning to produce syndicated series based on sci-fi features STARGATE and SPECIES. Other movies being adapted for the small screen include SEVEN, PHENOMENON, and BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER . . . The producers of MONSTERS and TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE have optioned all of Frank Herbert's Dune novels for miniseries treatment . . . NBC's hit sitcom 3rd ROCK FROM THE SUN ends the season with a three-dimensional bang—the season finale in May will be telecast in 3D . . .

Anne Rice is developing a CBS TV series to premiere this fall. It concerns two New Orleans cops, one of whom is a ghost. No title as yet; The Hound suggests N.O.P.D. BOO. Hey, shaddup

The Home Video Vault

The Hound's got his gas-powered pull-start VCR revved up for these recent rentals: THE FRIGHTENERS

(MCA), A TIME TO KILL (Warner), BORDELLO OF BLOOD (MCA), THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU (New Line), DRAGONHEART (MCA), ESCAPE FROM L.A. (Paramount), and a remastered 12 MONKEYS (MCA) . . . George Pal's WAR OF THE WORLDS is available from Paramount Home Video for a very limited time at \$9.95 . . . Arriving for the first time on video in February: René Clement's classic suspense thriller PURPLE NOON (1960), starring Alain Delon.

The laser disc mavens at Elite Entertainment have news that will have horror fans licking their pointed choppers—Hammer Films has licensed 14 of their titles to Elite for release in pristine, uncut, letterboxed deluxe editions. Production started in February on the first releases—DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, RASPUTIN, THE MAD MONK, PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES, and THE REPTILE. Upcoming titles are THE DEVIL RIDES OUT, FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN, FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH, THE MUMMY'S SHROUD, THE LOST CONTINENT, A CHALLENGE FOR ROBIN HOOD, SLAVE GIRLS, PREHISTORIC WOMEN, VENGEANCE OF SHE, THE DEVIL'S OWN, and THE VIKING QUEEN. All titles will be transferred from the original film negatives for razor laser sharpness. Ouch!

The World Weird Web

Sinister surfers will enjoy "Silent Scream: The Unofficial Barbara Steele Home Page," which features a nice filmography and colorful poster art (<http://www.inch.com/~hepcat/steele.html>) . . . Hardcore fans of THE X-FILES will love reading author Sarah Stegall's insightful episode reviews and overviews (<http://pillar.ncl.ac.uk/~naj5/x-files/>).

Gone, but never to be forgotten: mystery novelist Mignon G. Eberhart, composers Burton Lane and Irving Gordon, lyricist Irving Caesar, photographer Paula Klaw, and actors Lew Ayres, Sheldon Leonard, Jesse White, Willard Parker, Mark Lenard, Larry Gates, Adriana Caselotti (the immortal voice of Disney's Snow White), Jason Bernard, Gene Nelson, Howard E. Rollins, Joan Perry, Marcello Mastroianni, Jack "Eras erhead" Nance, Marjorie Reynolds, Juliet Prowse, Annabella, Bibi Besch, Joanne Dru, and the Cat's original Canary, Laura La Plante.



Crimson Chronicles

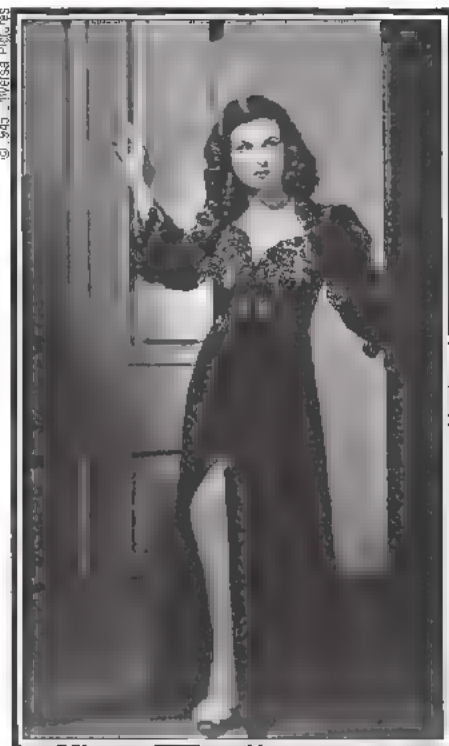
by Forrest J Ackerman



SCARLET STREET, the movie (1945) not this magazine. Directed by Fritz Lang of METROPOLIS, Peter Lorre in M, WOMAN IN THE MOON, and WOMAN IN THE WINDOW fame. Besides Lang as director, the latter film and SCARLET STREET had something in common, the female lead, Joan Bennett. (Her sister, Constance, played in the original TOPPER.) Lang was quite fond of Joan and in the latter days of his life, almost blind, Lang religiously sat glued to the TV set each day when she appeared in the popular supernatural series, DARK SHADOWS. I almost got dark shadows on my chin and cheeks as my beard grew from 10:30 in the morning till 2:30 in the afternoon while (with a lunch break) Lang directed Joan in a single scene in WOMAN IN THE WINDOW. She had merely to peer apprehensively out of a door and slowly close it, but Lang had it photographed over and over and over again. I wondered how long it would take to shoot a scene when someone finally had to move or say something! Well, it's legend that he shot 49 times as much footage for METROPOLIS as ever reached the screen. Raymond Massey—the great John Cabal of H.G. Wells' THINGS TO COME—was on the set and I had a brief chat with him about the number of "takes." "Well," he said, "he knows what he wants. He's a great director."

Despite the number of times it had already been made, starting in the silent days and garnering an Oscar for the Fredric March talking version, Lang himself wanted to do his version of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, but unfortunately was not able to give us another imagi-movie masterpiece because of his failing eyesight. I wonder what he would have made of all the remakes scheduled for 1997? Two versions of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. . . A new KING KONG. (Let's hope

it's an improvement over the lamentable DeLaurentiis fiasco. Don't Rape the Ape a second time! And, hey, producers: how about having Ray Harryhausen animate KONG's legendary lost spider scene?) . . . A new MIGHTY JOE YOUNG with Rick Baker, Monster Maker, having built a



Joan Bennett in SCARLET STREET

19 foot tall Joe . . . BARBARELLA with Drew Barrymore as the draw, PLANET OF THE APES (Schwarzenegger), THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE, FORBIDDEN PLANET, JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH . . . Then there'll be firsttime scientifilms in Robert A. Heinlein's STARSHIP TROOPERS and THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, IGNITION by the Star Wars book author Kevin Anderson ALIEN RESURRECTION (ALIEN #4), LOU GAROU (obviously a lycanthropicture), WARRIOR OF WAV-

ERLY STREET (aliens attacking what's left of Earth), possibly Alfred Bester's classic THE DEMOLISHED MAN, a Curt (DONOVAN'S BRAIN) Siodmak sci-fi novel (*The Third Ear, Gabriel's Body*) and, for 1998, at long last—SLAN!

FANDEMONIUM! There were 7000 fans at the 54th World Science Fiction Convention (of which I have attended 53, my record interrupted only in 1951 when Prince Sirik took my Dad to Death's Domain) and three days before the con and five days afterward from 10AM to 10PM I had an Open House, with fans converging on the Ackermansion from all over the USA as well as Canada, England, Mexico, Switzerland, Brazil, Germany, and Japan. Some of the comments in the Guest Book were: "Everything I imagined it would be—and more!" "So wonderful I have no words." "The words fail . . . the soul soars." "The lost ark, the holy grail . . . of all SFI!" "There is really nothing that can fully describe your collection." "Thanks for recharging my sense of wonder." "Ten worldcons after we first met I made the pilgrimage." "2nd visit in 8 days. I am dizzy & overwhelmed." "Dazzling! I'll send you my first book this fall to add to your collection. Brian Akers." "Hope to come back in the next century, and even after." "It's worth a trip from anywhere in the solar system!" "Now that I've seen the house, I can finish the tour of the web site, but cyberspace still loses to reality." "A lifelong dream to be here finally realized." "My hopes for finding a way to catalog and preserve this wonderful collection for future generations. You are the ONLY Famous Monster to me." "Can I be buried here?" (Tomb do you wish to be buried next to? Mary Shelley? Bram Stoker?) "Stupendous! Really the Final Frontier." "Only took 33 years to get here . . . worth the wait." "I'm in the presence of sacredness so I write these words while on my

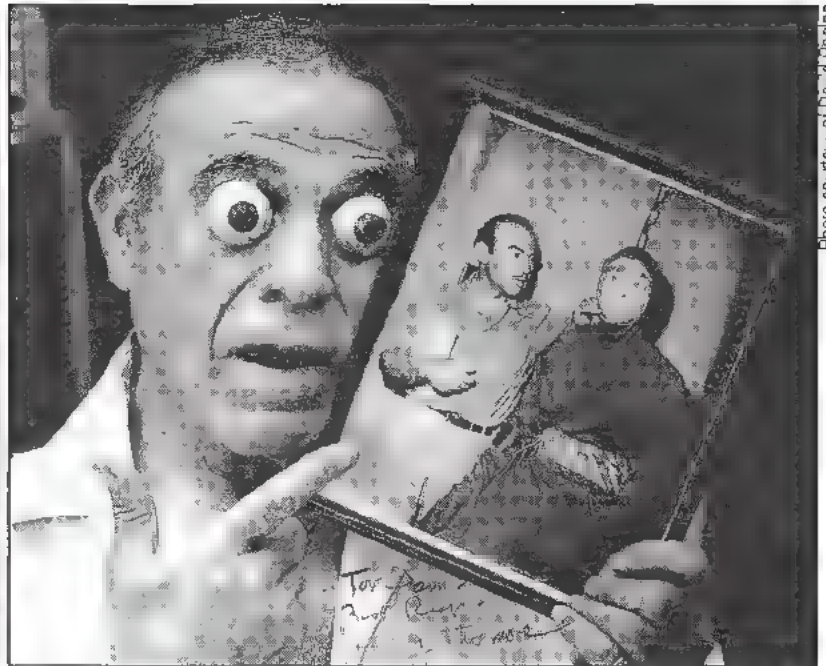
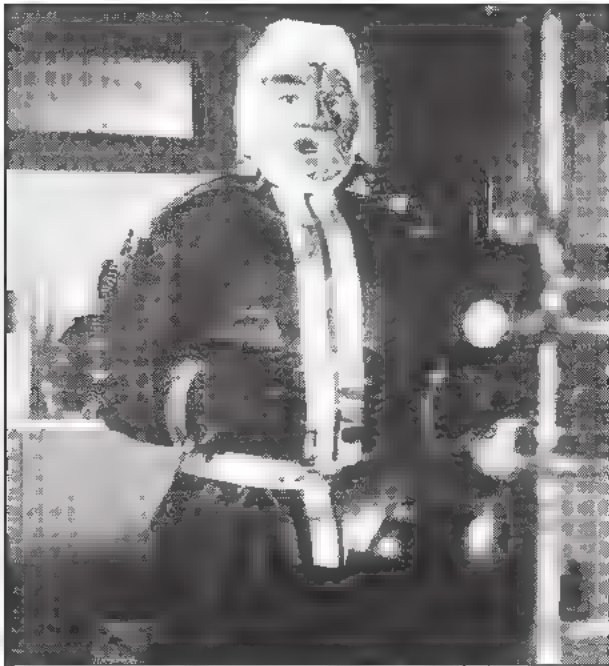


Photo courtesy of David Phelps

LEFT: When Harry Thomas designed the messy makeup for *FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER* (1959), they forgot to tell him that it was the monster, not the mad scientist, who was Daddy's Little Ghoul. **RIGHT:** Is it Eddie Cantor? Peter Lorre? No, it's Harry Thomas posing with his *KILLERS FROM SPACE* (1954) peepers.

knees. If your sense of wonder is not stimulated here, you are inert matter." If you're ever near, phone 213-MOON FAN for an appointment. I'm in Griffith Park in Hollywood. No admission charge, pictures okay (as long as you don't take them off the wall).

FLASH! Just had a phone call from New York from Miramax. They're having a contest in conjunction with Wes Craven's new horror spoof, *SCREAM*, and I've agreed to open the Ackermansion to the winner and h.s./her guest and give them the conducted tour of Grislyland, the Garage Mahal, the Rainbow Room, and

the rest of the 15 rooms. You can read the result in the next *CRIMSON CHRONICLES* column—maybe the winner will be a Scarlet Streeter!

FINALLY... this number 3 of the *Crimchrons* is dedicated to the memory of the late Harry Thomas, taken by Prince Sirki at 87. A makeup artist from the silent days (he made up Garbo), he worked with Jack Pierce, he did the makeup on the original *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, *NIGHT OF THE BLOOD BEAST*, *SPACE MONSTER*, *FRANKENSTEIN'S DAUGHTER*, *PHANTOM FROM SPACE*, *HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER*, and a myriad of other

horror films. At a funeral memorial for him, one filmmonster fan came all the way from Texas (David Phelps, who provided the accompanying foto of pop-eyed Harry), and Lee Harris (*PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE* narrator) gave the best eulogy I have ever heard for a Hollywood personality. Harry was a model human being and will be missed in the filmmonster community and by myself, Forry Ackerman. Like Dracula, I'm always in the red, and will be seizing you (by the throat) next issue.



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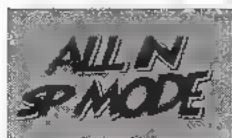
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SCREEN...



and Screen AGAIN!



Scarlet Street's Laser Review

MGM HORROR CLASSICS
MGM/UA Home Video
Six Sides CLV
\$99.95

For a Hollywood studio whose guiding light, Louis B. Mayer, loathed horror movies and took great pride in good, old-fashioned family entertainment, it is ironic that MGM produced many of the genre's most gleefully aberrant shockers. Sadism, torture, incest, mutilation, sexual perversity, gross exploitation of human deformities—all crept their way into MGM story treatments and were brought to vivid life in front of the cameras. Inevitably, a good deal of this material ended up on the cutting-room floor, or was purged by local censorship boards. But a healthy percentage has survived the decades, serving to remind us that the studio renowned for glossy, star-laden soap operas, historic dramas, musical extravaganzas, and Andy Hardy, had a dark side to its personality as well. Indeed, such majors as Metro and Paramount proved that the market for horror films wasn't necessarily cornered by Universal and RKO.

After a prolonged delay (does any laserdisc live up to its announced street date anymore?), MGM has released a deluxe, three-platter set boasting four of their most memorable '30s classics: *THE MASK OF*

FU MANCHU (1932), *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE* (1935), *MAD LOVE* (1935), and *THE DEVIL-DOLL* (1936). In collectors' circles, the phrase "must have" has been overused to the point of parody in recent years. In the case of *MGM HORROR CLASSICS*, it is an understatement. None of the studio's patented gloss has been lost in the transition from film to laserdisc. Minor scratches and negligible blemishes notwithstanding, these pictures haven't looked this good in years. From the luminous lensing to the richly detailed art direction, the glories that were once MGM's hallmark are on vivid display in this very special set.

The delirious melodramatics of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* make it a kitsch classic and, arguably, the most enjoyable movie in the collection. Despite reports to the contrary, Boris Karloff looks as though he's



having the time of his life as Sax Rohmer's power-hungry Devil Doctor, a madman who will stop at nothing to gain possession of the ancient sword and mask entombed with Genghis Khan. Fu gets ample opportunity to exercise his colorful methods of torture on Sir Denis Nayland Smith (played with panache by Lewis Stone) and his party of archaeologists, who beat the Asian to the artifacts, while Fu's sex-crazed daughter (Myrna Loy) rapes handsome, young Charles Starrett after first having him whipped into submission.

In a typically inane example of political correctness, prints of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* were severely censored in the 1970s, when MGM caved in to demands from the Japanese American Citizens League, who deemed the film "offensive and demeaning to Asian Americans." After more than 20 years, the cuts have finally been restored via duppy 16mm replacement footage, and we may once again savor *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* in all its allegedly offensive glory.

Condemned by horror purists for its blatantly derivative script and "it was all a setup" cop-out ending, Tod Browning's *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE* contains more atmosphere than a full three-quarters of his Universal classic *DRACULA* (1931). The director's talkie remake of his beloved-lost Chaney silent *LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT* (1927) borrows liberally from *DRACULA* in terms of characterization and plotting, and falls into the same talky, claustrophobic rut that has severely dated its predecessor. That these flaws do not put the kibosh entirely on *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE* is a testament to the often-maligned talents of Browning, who endows this handsomely mounted chiller with enough nightmarish effects for two movies. Lionel Barrymore's vampire specialist Professor Zelen is every bit as irritating and ponderous as Edward Van Sloan's Van Helsing was in *DRACULA*, but his illustrious costars Bela Lugosi, Jean Hersholt, Lionel Atwill, Holmes Herbert, and especially Carroll Borland, boost the entertainment values of *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE* considerably.

"I have conquered science! Why can't I conquer love?" is the whiny lament of Peter Lorre's incurably romantic Dr. Gogol, who must settle

for playing out his libidinous fantasies with the wax figure of his dream woman in *MAD LOVE*. The real gem of the MGM collection, *MAD LOVE* is an acquired taste; this viewer fell in love with the quirky, bizarre film after long considering it self-indulgent and overrated. Based on the oft-filmed Maurice Renard novel *Les Mains d'Orlac* (1920), *MAD LOVE* benefits from Karl Freund's sure-handed direction, and the excellent performances of Lorre (in his American film debut), Frances Drake, and Colin Clive. Clive, who does his best work in the genre since *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931), puts a personal stamp on the role of tormented pianist Stephen Orlac; the angst of the character, driven to near madness by forces beyond his control, almost mirror the real life emotional conflicts that would soon drive the sensitive British actor to a premature death in 1937. The transition of this title to laserdisc is so fine that you can clearly see the telltale scars on Orlac's wrists, upon which were grafted the hands of a murderer.

THE DEVIL DOLL, a comparatively minor entry in the Browning canon, has enough offbeat and enjoyably bizarre elements going for it to warrant a reappraisal. Lionel Barrymore redeems himself in a star-calibre performance that was tailor-made for Lon Chaney. Portraying a respected banker who escapes from prison after being framed by his shifty business partners, Barrymore is required to wear an absurd disguise in most of his scenes—that of a dowdy old lady. (The voice he affects sounds like a cross between Julia Child and Mrs. Doubtfire!) His instruments of revenge are human slaves, shrunk to a sixth of their normal size by scientist Henry B. Walthall and his wife, the wonderfully dotty Rafaela Ottiano. Best scene: one of the little people disguised as a Christmas tree ornament, drops off a branch and plunges a poisonous needle into one of Barrymore's sleeping enemies.

Following *THE DEVIL-DOLL* are vintage theatrical trailers promoting this title, *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*, and *MAD LOVE*. The latter two trailers are particularly interesting in that they present Bela Lugosi and Peter Lorre, respectively, eerily inviting audiences to catch their latest attractions.

—John Brunas



**THE HAUNTED STRANGLER/
CORRIDORS OF BLOOD**
Producers Associates/Image
Three Sides CLV
\$49.95

Although British-born horror king Boris Karloff earned his fame and fortune in the United States, he occasionally returned to the land of his roots to make appearances in some of their more offbeat productions, such as *THE GHOUL* (1933) and *THE MAN WHO LIVED AGAIN* (1936). He also starred in an early '50s British television series called *COLONEL MARCH OF SCOTLAND YARD*. In 1958, Karloff made yet another trip to the U.K., where he filmed two features back-to-back for Anglo-Amalgamated and Producers Associates. Both films were directed by Robert Day, who later went on to helm *FIRST MAN INTO SPACE* (1959) and Hammer Films' version of *SHE* (1965). While neither film is particularly hair-raising (by today's demanding standards, that is), both are well-produced for their Spartan budgets, and Karloff gives his legion of fans two of the finest and most enjoyable performances of his long and illustrious career.

In the first feature, Karloff plays a Victorian-era amateur criminologist and writer named James Rankin, who is researching the mid-19th century serial murder case of the "Haymarket Strangler." He is convinced that the man executed for the crimes, a one-armed man named Styles (Michael Atkinson), was innocent. Rankin becomes obsessed with finding the real killer, but is un-

aware until it is too late that some things are better left buried in the past.

CORRIDORS OF BLOOD takes place in 1840s London. Karloff stars as Thomas Bolton, a British doctor who is trying to develop an anesthetic that will eliminate the unbearable pain and suffering of patients during surgery. When his first demonstration, in the presence of the hospital's medical council, goes horribly wrong, Bolton is ostracized by his peers. The supplies of chemicals necessary to continue his experiments are cut off by the hospital's director. Bolton is forced to deal with a couple of nefarious characters named Black Ben (Francis de Wolff) and Resurrection Joe (Christopher Lee), who, like the infamous Burke and Hare, murder people in order to supply doctors with cadavers for medical study. To get the drugs he desperately needs—not only to carry on his work, but to feed his growing addiction to them—the good doctor soon finds himself embroiled in a phony death certificate scheme.

While Karloff carries the major acting burden in *THE HAUNTED STRANGLER*, with only minimal assistance from Elizabeth Allan, Jean Kent, and Anthony Dawson (remember him as the wicked Marquis in Hammer's *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF?*), *CORRIDORS OF BLOOD* boasts quite an array of superb talent in supporting parts. In addition to an early glimpse of Christopher Lee—before *HORROR OF DRACULA* catapulted him to stardom—look for such familiar faces as Betta St. John, Finlay Currie, Francis Matthews, Adrienne Corri, Nigel Green, and Charles Lloyd Pack. Oh, and one other young woman: Yvonne Warren, who might ring a bell with some who know her under the name Yvonne Romain. (You'll find Romain strutting her stuff in *CIRCUS OF HORRORS*, *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF*, and *NIGHT CREATURES*, among other films.)

Both films are in black and white and, while the quality of the first feature is not as pristine as one might wish, the second film is in near-mint condition. The sound quality on both is adequate. As an extra-added treat, each film is followed by its theatrical trailer.

Though *THE HAUNTED STRANGLER* and *CORRIDORS OF BLOOD* are enjoyable as fiction, they suffer

somewhat chronologically and historically. In *STRANGLER*, the film opens with the execution (in 1860) of Styles. The story moves ahead 20 years, with Karloff and Dawson rummaging through the case files in Scotland Yard's basement. As the camera pans the room, one box marked "Jack the Ripper" comes into glaring view, though even a novice Ripperologist knows that the Whitechapel murders took place in 1888, nearly eight years later. *CORRIDORS* alleges that Bolton's work was successfully carried on by his son, played by Francis Matthews, at the same British hospital sometime after the doctor's death. In reality, the first successful use of an anesthetic (diethyl Ether) took place in 1846 at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, when William Morton (a dentist) administered the ether so that surgeon Dr. John C. Warren could painlessly remove a tumor in his patient's jaw. (You'll find this great moment dramatized in a 1944 Preston Sturges featured aptly titled *THE GREAT MOMENT*.) Within two years, Morton's general anesthesia was being used throughout the United States and Europe.

—Deborah Del Vecchio

RE-ANIMATOR

Elite Entertainment
Two Sides CLV
\$49.95

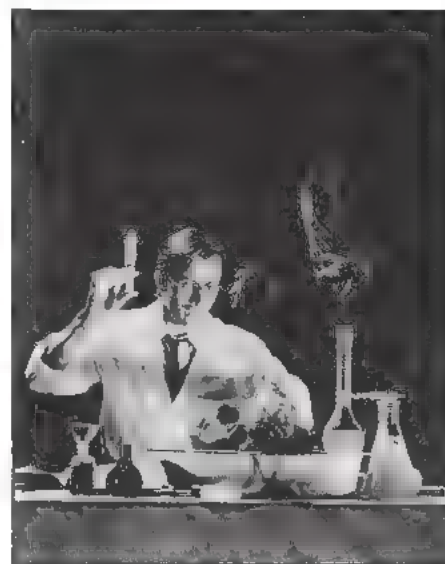
Stuart Gordon's *RE-ANIMATOR* is ghastly, gory, and hilarious. The multitude of fans it has gained since its 1985 theatrical release couldn't care less that it plays fast and loose with its H.P. Lovecraft source material. They do care that all home video releases have been murky and/or incomplete—until now.

Elite Entertainment's 10th Anniversary Edition of *RE-ANIMATOR* was transferred from a new, spotless film print of the original unrated version, and its creation was supervised by Brian Yuzna, the film's producer. This letterboxed, digitally-mastered edition includes trailers, 20 minutes of alternate footage, and two full length commentary tracks on its analog audio tracks. Yes, *RE-ANIMATOR* has been expertly re-animated.

Horror fans Gordon and Yuzna met in the Chicago stage community in 1983. Neither had made a feature film before. It was their theater expe-

rience and their love of great horror movies that carried them through—and the collaboration of a top-notch cast and technical crew.

The main characters of the film, loosely based on Lovecraft's relatively obscure six-part serial *Herbert West—Reanimator*, are medical stu-



dent Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott) and his brilliant, excessively weird new roommate Herbert West (Jeffery Combs). West has arrived (escaped?) from Switzerland to Arkham, Massachusetts, to transfer into Miskatonic University's medical program. His theories on the reanimation of dead brain tissue anger Dr. Hill, a professor who has unusual influence with the university's Dean Halsey (Robert Sampson). Halsey's daughter Meg (Barbara Crampton), who is Dan's girlfriend, is creeped out by Herbert's odd, furtive behavior. Her misgivings are confirmed when she finds Dan's pet cat lying dead in Herbert's fridge. The subsequent reviving of the dead cat with Herbert's luminous green regenerative solution is one of the best-remembered scenes in *RE-ANIMATOR*. It starts off a series of increasingly over-the-top sequences of reanimation that are alternately (and often simultaneously) hideous and hilarious.

As mentioned above, this laserdisc edition includes many extras: the theatrical trailer, three TV spots, alternate footage from the cutting room floor that was restored to other versions, and a vivid "dream sequence" that was shot but removed by the filmmakers before release. Once you've watched all this great

material, the fun will just be beginning—the disc also includes two entertaining full-length commentary tracks. On analog channel one, director Gordon provides a great behind-the-scenes look at the production and its origins. Especially entertaining are the stories of his first exposure to Lovecraft's *Reanimator* tales, and his disturbing tour of a real hospital morgue. Analog channel two contains a real treat: actors Abbott, Combs, Crampton, Sampson, and producer Yuzna reunite to watch the film for the first time in years, raucously reminiscing about the production and hooting and hollering at the screen and each other. Detailed information on each of 54 chapter stops, as well as several gruesome (of course) color photos from the film, are contained in the glossy gatefold cover of this top-notch laser release.

—John J. Mathews

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

Columbia
Two Sides CLV
\$39.95

This charmingly light romantic comedy of sophisticated New York witches and warlocks is about as far as one can run from the historical horrors of last year's *THE CRUCIBLE* and the earlier *CONQUEROR WORM* (1968, known in England as *WITCHFINDER GENERAL*), not to mention the daily shocks of late 20th century living. Based on the popular Broadway play by John Van Druten, *BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE* (1958) tells the tale of Gillian Holroyd (the never more ravishing Kim Novak), a Greenwich Village sorceress whose life would bore her to tears—if only witches could cry. As a devilish diversion, Gillian makes the upstairs mortal (James Stewart) fall for her and, before she knows it, finds herself caught in her own web of witchery.

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE is more worldly-wise than television's *BEWITCHED* and less fall-down farcical than *I MARRIED A WITCH* (the 1942 comedy based on Topper creator Thorne Smith's *The Passionate Witch*), but it has quiet amusements to spare and a supporting cast that can't be beat: Jack Lemmon and Elsa Lanchester as Gillian's witchy relations, Ernie Kovacs as a befuddled writer summoned magically to Man-



hattan, and the incomparable Her-
moine Gingold as a spellbinder dis-
missed by Gillian as "the Brooklyn
harpy."

The picture is justly famous for its
use of color, but a previous, washed-
out laserdisc release did little to en-
hance that reputation. The bright
new Columbia disc makes up for it
with gorgeous tones that warm the
screen and enhance the romance. (In
particular, note the clever, blue-
tinted point-of-view shots of Gilli-
an's "familiar," the Siamese cat Pye-
wacket.) The soundtrack is appropri-
ately as clear as a bell, serving to
make one long all the more for a CD
release of George Duning's sprightly
musical score (with its bouncy,
bongo-beat version of "Stormy Wea-
ther" for a scene in which Gillian
hexes a haughty rival wary of thun-
der and lightning).

If you're looking to relax for a
spell and don't know which witch to
choose, you could do far worse than
summon this delightful disc to your
laser player.

—Drew Sullivan

**THE CLIMAX/
THE STRANGE DOOR**
MCA/Universal Home Video
Four Sides CLV
\$69.95

Here are a couple of platters few
Boris Karloff fans will want to pass
up—although the set makes for a
less than ideal double bill. The films
are separated by nearly a decade;
one is a patchy black-and-white pro-
grammer, the other a big-bash Tech-
nicolor production. Not only that:

neither can rightly be termed Karloff
vehicles.

THE CLIMAX (1944) is, if any-
thing, a showcase for Technicolor it-
self. Universal's alternative project
to a proposed sequel to their highly
profitable 1943 PHANTOM OF THE
OPERA remake, THE CLIMAX is a
rather tepid tale of menace and mur-
der in the opera house. The cost of
Technicolor film stock was high dur-
ing the war years and Universal
mounted their color productions
with an eye for pageantry. Accord-
ingly, studio producers ordered up
heavy doses of kitsch (giving Uni-
versal's reigning Sarong Queen,
Maria Montez, plenty of work) and
THE CLIMAX has more than its
share. Color is the film's greatest
strength—and, in a funny way, its
greatest weakness, too—but this
pristine pressing brings out the
film's eye-popping splendor to re-
markable effect. The golden flesh
tones and lush reds and blues, so
typical of Technicolor's glory days,
are shown to excellent advantage,
especially during the long but in-
sipid opera sequences (which
strangely seem better suited for the
Radio City Music Hall stage than the
Met).

In his first color horror film, Kar-
loff contends with much more than



just bad music. The old hat plot has
the star as Dr. Frederic Hohner, the
Svengali-like physician-in-residence
of a leading Germany opera com-
pany. After strangling to death a
near-legendary diva (June Vincent)
when she spurns him, the obsessed
doctor uses his mesmeric skills to
destroy a pretty up-and-coming
singing star (Susanna Foster). While
the 1944-1945 film season saw such
powerhouse psychopathic roles as
John Carradine's in BLUEBEARD
and Laird Cregar's in HANGOVER
SQUARE, Karloff's role as Dr. Hoh-

ner is insultingly underwritten. (He
isn't given a single sustained speech
in the 86-minute running time.)
Karloff's approach, too, is too low-
keyed, too controlled to really break
through the "gaslight" atmosphere.
Hohner comes off looking more em-
balmed than menacing.

Karloff's stern refusal to really let
go in THE CLIMAX contrasts sharp-
ly with the cheery Charles Laughton,
who throws himself into his saucy
role in THE STRANGE DOOR (1951)
with alarming abandon. In this mel-
odrama based on a Robert Louis
Stevenson tale, Laughton plays a
merrily unhinged member of the
French aristocracy, whose postmor-
tem vengeance on his lady love in-
cludes leaving her husband to rot in
the family dungeon and arranging a
disagreeable marriage for her now
nubile daughter. The centerpiece of
this potboiler is Laughton, who
sashays from one mad scene to the
next and, by the last reel, pushes
screen hamminess to its limit.

Unfazed by material so obviously
beneath him, Laughton takes rollick-
ing delight in obliterating just about
everyone else in the cast. Karloff
once again comes up short in the oaf-
ish, negligible role of the family
henchman, who secretly has it in for
his master. Long past the days when
he could play monsters and brutes
convincingly, old Uncle Boris, don-
ning not a stitch of body padding, is
a sad sight as he supposedly over-
powers brawny actors and extras a
fraction his age. So much for convic-
tion—but half the charm of this
Gothic romp is that it never takes it
self very seriously in the first place.
Except for a relentlessly churning
water wheel that's put to imaginati-
vely horrific use, the sets are left
overs from the studio's old monster
hits and the (uncredited) Hans
Salter/Paul Dessau score is lifted
from HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.

As with THE CLIMAX, the print
used in the transfer is top-drawer,
although MCA has failed to include
a trailer for THE STRANGE DOOR.

Michael Brunas

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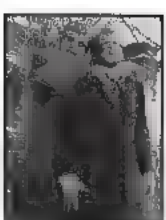
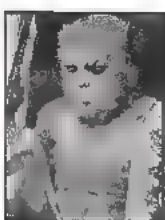
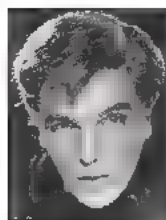
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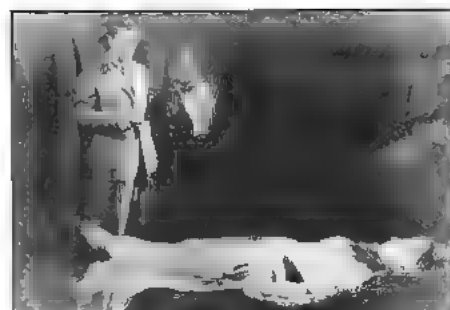
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trade papers by introducing their new catchline, "Getting respect in Hollywood." The campaign probably got a few snickers, but these days the horror films of Monogram and PRC, the so-called Poverty Row of pre-'50s Hollywood, are still popular titles in the public domain market—so much so that, in certain quarters, the buzz is that these grindhouse quickies with their monumentally dopey plots and nonexistent production values can rightfully stand toe-to-toe with their more celebrated competitors (Universal, Val Lewton, you name it) in terms of sheer entertainment.

This set doesn't go very far in validating such nutty claims, but for collectors of vintage horror it may be well worth owning. The Lugosi name alone would seemingly make Monogram's *THE MYSTERIOUS MR. WONG* (1935) the choice title here, but it's the least enjoyable of the lot. A low-rent retread of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, Bela represents the Yellow Peril as Fu Wong (no relation to Hugh Riley's detective character portrayed by Boris Karloff), a crime lord hoping to gain the emperorship by stealing the legendary twelve coins of Confucius. Emerging from the East Asian bric-a-brac, Lugosi handily fulfills expectations as the comic-book embodiment of oriental cunning, barking commands to worshipful underlings, occasionally stopping to toss an expendable foot soldier into a pit of rats. Most memorable, though, is Wong going undercover to impersonate a bumbling "no speakee English" Chinaman in that thick, familiar Lugosian accent—truly, Bela at his daffiest. Wallace Ford, always a better actor than he's given credit for, is wasted as the loudmouth newspaperman. The film finds a plucky working-class heroine in Arline Judge. Still, with most of the action taking place amongst the cheap storefronts and back alleys of an unconvincing backlot Chinatown, the movie's drabness quickly inspires tedium and stays that way through six long reels.

PRC's thrillers never quite attained the dizzying heights of lunacy of their Monogram counterparts. As such, the serviceable mad scientist meller *THE MONSTER MAKER* (1944) might be seen as above average and is at least free of grotesque ethnic stereotypes. The

offbeat story concerns a gland doctor (J. Carroll Naish) who infects a concert pianist (Ralph Morgan) with acromegaly in a dubious strategy to win his pretty daughter (Wanda McKay, Poverty Row's resident horror queen). Clearly patterned after Uni-



versal's lesser genre romps of the period, the film doesn't get much help from Sam Newfield's artless direction or the unctuous Naish, one of the lesser lights of screen horror. The film at least takes itself seriously, though the thin material necessitates tacked-on plot contrivances and some highly disposable gorilla-on-the-loose mayhem just to get it limping past a 60-minute running time. Maurice Seiderman, the makeup genius of *CITIZEN KANE*, produced the stiff and obviously rushed mask effects in one of his few horror assignments.

Originality never was a Monogram hallmark, so the success of Paramount's *THE GHOST BREAKERS* (1940) had its impact on 1941's *KING OF THE ZOMBIES*. Just a hair's breadth away from being an outright farce, this last item on the program gets underway as a couple of American flyers crash on an island off the coast of Cuba. There, a Nazi scientist (Henry Victor, the strong man of *FREAKS*, affecting a fair Lugosi impersonation) solves the local labor shortage by reviving the dead. This minor feat of science goes largely unnoticed by the lughead Irish-American heroes (Dick Purcell and John Archer), who are scrambling to find the source of German radio transmissions. Although the horror content is rather slight, with the zombies only incidental to the plot, the comedy is adeptly handled by Charlie Chan regular Mantan Moreland. A genuinely talented low-comic, Moreland's "playing scared act" was as good as Lou Costello's, raising the film several notches above Monogram's East Side Kids

potboilers despite the crass "Amos 'n' Andy" humor.

Viewing these features from a 35mm source instead of the usual videos made from dupey 16mm prints is a rarity. Certainly, the films never looked better, but the format can't do much to enhance the flat lighting or the barebones set design. As usual, The Roan Group has done a commendable job in the transfer. Working from privately owned prints, there are, of course, more scratches than one would expect from a major studio release. *THE MYSTERIOUS MR. WONG* is somewhat pale. Soundtrack hiss, often a problem in Monogram and PRC prints, isn't intrusive. Music lovers will be delighted to hear that *KING OF THE ZOMBIES* seems to switch to simulated stereo during the toe-tapping climactic voodoo ceremony.

—Michael Brunas

THUNDERBALL

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The color dazzles! The sound astonishes! As promised, "This 30th Anniversary Deluxe Edition Laser Disc brings *THUNDERBALL* to life as never before." Good thing, too, because *THUNDERBALL* (1965) has always needed as much life as can be pumped into it. Coming on the glittering heels of that instant classic, *GOLDFINGER* (1964), and with Bond mania at its most frenzied, *THUNDERBALL* was the biggest Bond film to date. Unfortunately, compared to *GOLDFINGER* and *FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE* (1963), it was, while entertaining, not the best. The film took its own sweet time going not much of anywhere plotwise, while going everywhere geography wise as Secret Agent 007 outwitted a master villain (Adolfo Celi as Emilio Largo) who couldn't hold a match to Auric Goldfinger, Rosa Krebb, or the Fu Manchu-inspired Dr. No.

On the plus side, this letterboxed (2.28:1) laser release is so breathtaking that, if *THUNDERBALL* doesn't wholly succeed as a spy thriller, it can still be viewed as a travelogue. Also in the film's favor: Sean Connery in fine form as Bond, James

Continued on page 83



When *MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE* advertised its upcoming premiere of *GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS* in the early '60s, it included this blurb from the *New York Daily News*: "Makes King Kong look like a midget!" Being about seven years old, I misunderstood the quote and assumed that it meant that King Kong would also appear in the movie and that Godzilla (whatever he looked like) would possess the power to shrink him. I watched the entire film anticipating a guest appearance from Kong that never materialized!

GODZILLA (1956)

I had mixed feelings about *GODZILLA*, but I liked it well enough to view it a few more times that first *MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE* week. I wasn't too impressed with the stiff looking tyrannosaur-like monster, but I was fascinated by the havoc and destruction it caused. I was also frightened by the bleak, dirgelike background music, which I still find memorably haunting. Unlike many of the later "giant monster" films from Japan, *GODZILLA* is genuinely eerie, much of it taking place at night; the nocturnal scenes of Tokyo in flames are unusually compelling, even by today's standards. But I had problems with the title character. Sure, I thought Godzilla's fiery breath and glowing back plates were pretty neat stuff, but I didn't like the way this sluggish creature plowed through the city; aside from its incendiary breath, its principle means of destruction were its clumsy feet! To a

seven-year-old raised on King Kong, this seemed an undignified way for a giant monster to go about its business. When Godzilla tipped over a steel railway bridge, using its belly as much as its less-than-agile arms, it became painfully evident that I was merely watching a man in a dinosaur suit lumbering his way through miniature sets. Not for me. One shot showed the monster with a length of train hanging from either side of its mouth, making me wonder how it ever managed to get the train into its maw in the first place. (The costume could never have afforded the dexterity it would take to perform such a feat, unless Godzilla captured the train like a boy bobbing for apples.)

As was the case with *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953), *GODZILLA* was inspired by the popularity of *KING KONG*, which happened to be the all-time-favorite film of Toho's special-effects wizard, Eiji Tsuburaya. Released in Japan as *GOJIRA* at the tail end of 1954, *GODZILLA* made it to American shores in 1956. By that time, Toho and Tsuburaya had already released two follow-ups: *GODZILLA'S COUNTERATTACK* (1955, released in America in 1959 as *GIGANTIS, THE FIRE MONSTER*) and *RADON* (1956, released in America in 1957 as *RODAN*). *RODAN*, yet another *MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE* presentation, was more spectacular than the self-styled *KING OF THE MONSTERS*, but the destruction wreaked by the title monster—a monstrous, supersonic flying reptile—was also more aimless,

PREVIOUS PAGE: Great Balls of Fire! It's KING KONG VS. GODZILLA in the popular 1963 slugfest that revived the Godzilla franchise and brought considerable consternation to fans of King Kong and stop-motion animation. BELOW: THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN (1956) gives the most famous man-in-a-dino-suit the raspberry! RIGHT: Shortly after he encountered the somewhat moth-eaten Eighth Wonder of the World, it was time for Japan's King of the Monsters to meet Mothra in GODZILLA VS. THE THING (1964). NEXT PAGE LEFT: A lobby card for the original GODZILLA (1956). NEXT PAGE RIGHT: The big lug gives the breath of death to what looks like Toho's version of the Daily Planet Building.

being accomplished, primarily, by the force of its flapping wings.

The Toho monster films (which reproduced like rabbits during the '60s and early '70s, and included the inevitable KING KONG VS. GODZILLA in 1963) have an enormous American following but, KONG fanatic that I am, I've always been predisposed to stop-motion animation, a technique conspicuously avoided by the Japanese films. Nevertheless, if a showcase for excellent miniature sets and imaginative costumes is your idea of a good dinosaur movie, you can't do better than the Toho productions.



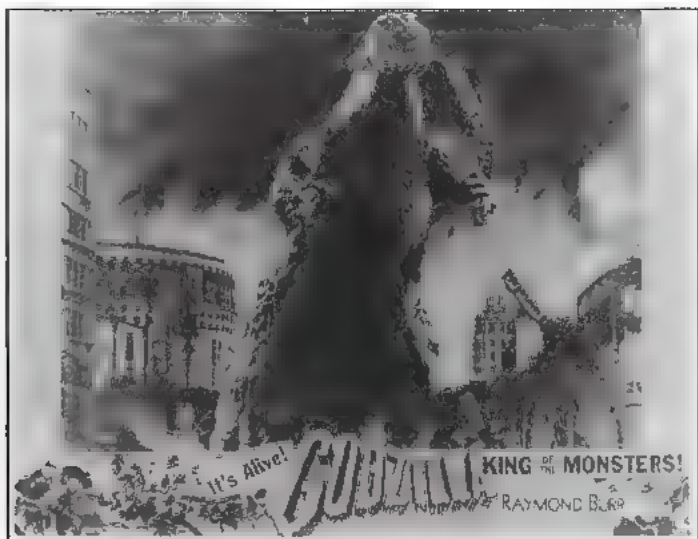
THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN (1956)

I know that THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN is nothing more than a run-of-the-mill western with an out-of-the-ordinary villain—a prehistoric carnivore—but I like the film, anyway. It was a personal favorite of mine, and I never failed to watch it when it began to turn up on television. Set, and shot, entirely in Mexico, HOLLOW MOUNTAIN's wild west staples—ranch wars, fist fights, saloons, land barons, cattle stampedes, Mexican street festivals—are strictly conventional, but its fun to see them intertwined with horrific elements (the same reason I like the 1959 vampire western CURSE OF THE UNDEAD)

Except for the satisfying last reel, most of the film is slow-going; whatever human interest it possesses comes from the touching subplot about a young Mexican boy (Mario Navarro) and his drunken, well meaning father (Pascual Garcia Peña). HOLLOW MOUNTAIN is the first of many '50s "giant monster" films to pander to the juvenile trade with the inclusion of a little boy as a central character; apparently, the filmmakers of THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN, 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH (1957), THE BLACK SCORPION (1957), and DINOSAURUS (1960) didn't know that we kids identified with the adult heroes, not the overzealous pint-sized tagalongs who were forever being rescued. Unfortunately, the adult heroes of such films—and HOLLOW MOUNTAIN is no exception—tended to be flat and uninteresting. I remember thinking that Guy Madison, television's Wild Bill Hickock, seemed a little lonesome without his faithful TV companion, Jingles (Andy Devine), stringing along, shouting, "Hey, Wild B.I.I! Wait for me!"

In spite of HOLLOW MOUNTAIN's weak script and perfunctory performances, those who had the patience to sit through its superfluous elements (like the overlong fist fight, or the comical-looking stampede wherein shots of walking cattle are speeded up in an unsuccessful attempt to simulate a running herd) were rewarded by a dandy climax and, courtesy of the wonders of stop-motion animation, one of cinema's more creative interpretations of a tyrannosaurus rex. Or is it an allosaurus?

THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN's genesis goes back to a Willis O'Brien story of the same name and,



further back, to two earlier O'Brien stories: "Gwangi" which featured cowboys and dinosaurs, and "Ring Around Saturn" (aka "Valley of the Mist"), a story about a Mexican boy, his pet bull, and an allosaurus. In O'Brien's original treatment, "The Beast of Hollow Mountain," it was a giant lizard (not a dinosaur) that terrorized ranchers. Because the Nassour brothers possessed the rights to both "Ring Around Saturn" and "The Beast of Hollow Mountain," they had their writers replace the latter story's giant lizard with the former story's allosaurus (which, in the film, wound up looking more like a tyrannosaurus—admittedly, the two species are similar). The writers also transferred the character of the Mexican boy (but not the bull) to their screenplay.

When I first saw the film, I was impressed by its creepy first scenes, those that show our heroes investigating the quicksand-ridden "haunted" valley surrounding Hollow Mountain; we hear the loud, echoing cackles of exotic birds . . . and something else . . . another sound. I still find this part of the film satisfyingly eerie. Like most kids, I was fascinated by quicksand (it was rumored to exist—in a form called "quackmud"—somewhere in a swamp within walking distance from my house), so I had no complaints about its presence in *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*. I also liked the solitary adobe hut at the edge of the swamp and its subsequent use as a shelter for our protagonists. As was customary with "giant monster" films of the era, the menace is kept off-screen for most of the running time, more than midway through, we get our first look at Hollow Mountain's beast. After some poorly executed shots of rubber dinosaur feet plodding about on firm ground and in a shallow section of quicksand, we get a brief glimpse of an allosaurus (or is it a tyrannosaurus?) carrying a steer in its jaws. Of course, this is just a teaser. We still have a long wait (and endless crosscutting to the tedious native festival in town) before the "good part" begins.

Willis O'Brien was not the chief technician of *HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*'s animation effects (a position he did hold in the similarly structured *THE BLACK SCORPION*), but the Jack Rabin/Louis De Witt animation team was certainly aspiring to the O'Brien tradition. (They would, in fact, work with O'Brien on 1959's *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*). In *Keep Watching the Skies, Vol. I* (McFarland, 1982), author Bill Warren asserts that much of the film's animation was achieved through the use of numerous immobile sculptures rather than by a single model



of the flexible variety (the method used for George Pal's famed *PUPPETOONS*). At 24-sculptures-per-second, this seems difficult to believe, but something has to account for the strikingly unusual quality of the animation and the detailed texture of the model's hide.

This cinematic dinosaur is really a one-of-a-kind. It may not be as vibrant as those animated by O'Brien or Harryhausen, but no one can deny that the Beast of Hollow Mountain has personality. Okay, it sneers too often and its ever-wagging tongue is about three sizes too large for its mouth but, these quirks aside, it is a memorable creation. How often do the movies give us a tyrannosaurus that actually runs, let alone one that runs in an altogether convincing fashion? After being appalled by the ponderous gaits of the examples provided in *ONE MILLION B.C.* (1940) and *UNKNOWN ISLAND* (1948), it was refreshing to finally see a tyrannosaurus run. We also get to see it slide, in a surfer's stance (well, almost), down a steep, sandy slope. Several impressive effects are achieved when the beast traps the generic heroine (Patricia Medina) and the boy in the adobe hut; after the beast makes short work of the roof, sticking its head in the gap and biting in half their improvised weapon, a long pole, Señor Jimmy (Madison) comes to the rescue. When Jimmy's romantic rival (Eduardo Noriega) is about to perform a treacherous act, the dinosaur interferes, forcing the two men to hole up in a small cave into which the creature reaches with its massive arm, eventually picking up the villain and throwing him, head first, into solid rock.

The special effects of *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN* may deserve a better movie, but if you're in the habit of counting your blessings in small doses, the film is perfect low-budget fare. Oh—and by the way—guess what natural hazard within the surrounding area accounts for the beast's sinking demise?



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LEFT: As evidenced in this behind-the-scenes shot, Universal's **THE LAND UNKNOWN** (1957) sported an elaborate set and some fair-sized dinosaurs, but somehow it wasn't up to the level of the studio's other sci-fi thrillers. RIGHT: Director Eugene Lourie returned to 20,000 FATHOMS territory with **THE GIANT BEHEMOTH** (1959), a surprisingly effective little film.

THE LAND UNKNOWN (1957)

THE LAND UNKNOWN, which I caught on a 1960 double-bill with **THIS ISLAND EARTH** (1954), was the first dinosaur film that I saw in a movie theater. (It's true that I saw **JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH** on the big screen the year before, but **JOURNEY** was really a fantasy epic that happened to have a short dinosaur sequence; it was not, per se, a dino-film.) "This is the real thing," I thought, as I studied **THE LAND UNKNOWN**'s lobby poster for who-knows-how-long? Dinosaurs were so popular in 1960 that **THE LAND UNKNOWN** was given the top half of the double bill, even though **THIS ISLAND EARTH** was a far better movie, with the advantages of a bigger budget and color photography.

After being held in awe by the special effects of **THIS ISLAND EARTH**, I was, to say the least, disappointed with **THE LAND UNKNOWN**; I liked some aspects of the film—the scenery, the carnivorous plants, the subplot about the mysterious human inhabitant—but I didn't like the dinosaurs. I remember that I had so much contempt

for the film that, when it finally made its New York television debut, I didn't even bother to tune in.

Though uncredited as such, **THE LAND UNKNOWN** seems to have been inspired by equal portions of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1911) and Edgar Rice Burroughs' *The Land That Time Forgot* (1924). The dinosaurs come in two varieties: cumbersome, man-operated monstrosities and live lizards, this time without their customary dinosaur garb. The barrel-backed T-Rex costume is laughable, though the creature's vacant eyes do blink, and the Nessie-like Elasmosaur, looking like it's got an attitude problem, isn't much better (although, compared to the man-operated dinosaurs in **UNKNOWN ISLAND**, these two look like Harryhausen creations). **THE LAND UNKNOWN**'s lizard-dinosaurs were, for once, not the result of cribbed footage from **ONE MILLION B.C.**, a dubious distinction, considering that the earlier film made much better use of its live reptiles.

Given its Universal-International origins, **THE LAND UNKNOWN** is not without some merit, but it is

LEFT: The non-bucking bronto of **DINOSAURUS** (1960) carries a little boy (or an unreasonable facsimile thereof) on his back. RIGHT: Hammer and Harryhausen's **ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.** (1966) was one of the last gasps of stop-motion dino animation.



one of the worst of the studio's generally entertaining 1950s genre entries. When I'm in the mood for a B-budget multi-dinosaur film, I'll take *LOST CONTINENT* (1951).

THE GIANT BEHEMOTH (1959)

Eugene Lourie's *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* made it to the MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE in 1961, hitting the New York airwaves at least a year before Lourie's *BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* (1953). At the time, the only thing I knew about BEHEMOTH came from a photograph I had seen in a 1959 issue of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, the photo depicted a bald, elderly man with a face speckled with open wounds, the caption (by that jokester editor, Forrest J Ackerman) read: "This victim of the radioactive GIANT BEHEMOTH says, 'I never knew a moth could be so menacing.'" Well, I guess Forry managed to pull one over on this young reader, because when I first saw the *TV Guide* listing for *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* (as I pronounced it), I was sure the menace would be an overgrown atomic you-know-what, one that, apparently, after gobbling down the victim's clothes, went directly for the face. (Of course, I felt foolish after seeing the televised trailer, thinking to myself, "Yeah, as if anyone would ever make a monster movie about a giant moth!")

I watched *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* several times that week and—though parts of the film were tedious—I was captivated by its British locale, its spooky atmosphere, and its special effects. Today, I can see that the Willis O'Brien/Pete Peterson animation is surprisingly shoddy, and not nearly up to the high standards of Harryhausen's special effects for the earlier Lourie film. (It doesn't even come close to the Jack Rabin/Louis De Witt animation for *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*.) Putting aside its uneven dinosaur sequences, however, BEHEMOTH still offers several improvements over its Lourie predecessor. True, *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* is a glossier, better-made film, but BEHEMOTH's authentic locales evoke a richer atmosphere, and its timely hero (an environmental scientist, convincingly played by Gene Evans) is a stronger (if less conventionally heroic) protagonist than either of those played by Paul Christian or Kenneth Tobey in *BEAST*. (That BEHEMOTH's protagonist does not woo a "pretty scientist babe" through the course of the film is, in itself, refreshingly uncharacteristic of the genre.)

The secondary roles are also more interesting than those of the previous film. A subplot set in a small fishing village and involving a young woman (Leigh Madison) and her ill-fated fisherman father (Henry Vidon, whose behemoth-eaten complexion I saw in that *Famous Monsters* still) is so marvelously played, perfectly paced, and provocatively photographed that—sans monster effects—it provides some of the film's most memorably frightening moments. While the woman awaits the be-

lated arrival of her father, the film is infused with enough dark ambience (along with creaky floors, slamming doors, and baleful-sounding ocean breezes) to make Val Lewton proud. Also memorable for its less-is-more approach is a neat terror set-piece involving a dog that barks in the nighttime, a farmer, and his young son.

Apart from BEHEMOTH's flair for undisclosed horror, equally effective are the film's panicking-mob scenes. Such scenes, a Eugene Lourie specialty, became progressively more inspired—and grimmer—with each successive film of his dino-trilogy. In BEHEMOTH, the shots of panic-stricken crowds, running toward a retreating camera, are startling in their veracity; the unbridled terror reflected in the faces of these fleeing extras is so exaggerated that the whole effect becomes unexpectedly compelling. The shots that follow, those of pedestrians grop-

ing their way amid the chaos, their hands covering their ulcerated faces (the victims of, ahem, radioactivity), were surprisingly grisly for their time.

As good as some of its parts may be, however, *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* is bogged down by tedious exposition, turgid laboratory scenes (when Evans and his cohorts examine one fish after another in search of radioactive contamination, it's not unlike watching paint dry), and cut-rate animation effects that scarcely reflect any of the Willis O'Brien magic. If the shots of the monster (a "paleosaurus," or so they say) appear repetitious, it's because they are; in numerous places, shots are cropped, enlarged, and used again to simulate new footage. Because of this, we get to watch the title character flatten the same automobile three times! Then there are those innumerable cutaways to a closeup of the creature's head swaying back and forth to

mark the progress of the rest of its body which, during these moments, we are not permitted to see. This is quite a comedown from *BEAST*'s wonderful monster-on-the-rampage effects. Occasionally, we see concentric circles of radiation emanating from the creature head, an unconvincing effect which, at the time, reminded me of something I'd seen in a Clorets commercial.

The paleosaurus model is largely disappointing and full of very noticeable flaws in design and construction: seams show, putty surrounds the joints, and the face, especially its curiously ragged lipless jaws, has a markedly unfinished quality. When we see more than just the head and neck, the model's legs are often conspicuously below the bottom of the frame; this cute trick may avoid the extra animation time needed to show the monster's stride, but the overall result is unsatisfactory and the paleosaurus's progress suggests the fluidity of a caterpillar rather than the gallumphing gait of a four-legged beastie. Oddly, the most inspired bit of animation—an underwater shot of the paleosaurus swimming (a rarity in a genre in which such monsters are usually shown strolling the ocean floor)—is seen only too briefly. A mechan-



Jock Mahoney and Shawn Smith make tracks before the approach of Barney in *THE LAND UNKNOWN*.



The friendly caveman (Gregg Martell) of *DINOSAURUS* (1960) looks on in surprise as *GORG*O (1961) and his Mama steal a few tricks from *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS*. At least, this time, that lovable old fusspot Cecil Kellaway isn't the snack in the diving bell.

ical version of the paleosaur, seen from the neck up, is also used to vaguely approximate the behemoth's attack upon a ferryboat, but the application of this stiff-looking prop is repetitive and unconvincing. While the special effects department was busy cannibalizing and recycling its own animation footage, the sound effects department was recycling myriad bloodcurdling human screams from *KING KONG*. If the clipped, high-pitched growls of the behemoth sounds familiar, that's because they once belonged to a tyrannosaurus brought down to size by the Eighth Wonder of the World.

All in all, *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH*'s dino effects are a disappointment, especially considering Willis O'Brien's supervisory presence; that Jack Rabin and Louis De Witt (the duo responsible for *HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*'s fine animation) also had a hand in *BEHEMOTH* only makes the lackluster results more puzzling, and certainly less forgivable. All three of Eugene Lourie's dinosaur films are seriously flawed, but if we were to combine the special effects from *THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS* with the dark mood of *THE GIANT BEHEMOTH* and used them to tell the story of *GORG*O, we'd be looking at a masterpiece.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (1959) and THE LOST WORLD (1960)

These two films, both made at the same studio to capitalize on the then-current dinomania, will receive short mention here. *JOURNEY*, by far the better of the two and a classic of its type, is, strictly speaking, not a dinosaur film, while *THE LOST WORLD* (which is a genuine dinosaur film) has so few redeeming features that the less said about it the better.

The Dell Comics version of *JOURNEY* (based on the film, not the book) appeared around the same time as the film's whirlwind TV ad campaign. Television trailers for the film played with startling frequency and I dropped what I was doing and came running every time my parents heralded that the ad was on TV. *JOURNEY* may not have been a dino film, but it was certainly marketed as such; the way the trailer showcased the brief dinosaur sequence made it obvious that the publicity department were targeting a nation of junior paleontologists. It was also obvious from the trailer, however, that the dinosaurs were live lizards posing as dimetrodons. (Many of us knew that, technically speaking, dimetrodons weren't even dinosaurs, but mammal-like reptiles from the pre-dinosaur Permian Age.) Still, the ad was alluring; while I waited for *JOURNEY* to play a neighborhood theater, I bought the Dell Comic and was not at all impressed. I even picked up the *Classics Illustrated* comic-book adaptation of the Jules Verne novel and liked that even less, there were no dinosaurs in it at all! When I finally made it to the theater, I was primed for disappointment, but, to my surprise, I was entirely captivated by the colorful adventure and grand spectacle. Moreover, I was impressed by the brief but well-executed dimetrodon sequence (probably the most successful of lizard/dino masquerades).

THE LOST WORLD (a remake of the 1925 Willis O'Brien silent classic) was another matter. The lizards worked in *JOURNEY* because they were only a marginal addition to a film that didn't really need them; the prehistoric animals got us into the theater, but it was the rest of the movie that came as such a pleasant surprise. *THE LOST WORLD*, however, was predicated on the

wrongheaded notion that JOURNEY's huge box-office was directly linked to the film's use of live lizards posing as dinosaurs (Didn't the Fox execs know that their juvenile trade was born and bred on ONE MILLION B.C. and that stock footage from said film had been coming back upon us like a chronic case of indigestion?) Certainly Willis O'Brien, credited as Effects Technician, was present in name only (primarily because of his association with the original silent version, one would think). The effects aren't terrible, as far as live lizards go, but they wear thin very quickly, especially when Claude Rains' tiny Professor Challenger has the audacity to call a monitor lizard (with a ceratopsian "collar") a "brontosaurus" and a horned, finbacked lizard a "Tyrannosaurus rex."

The rest of the movie is cliché-ridden and strictly pedestrian; the performances are indifferent and the script is full of the kind of cloying humor that shows little respect for the genre it obviously intends to exploit. Even *Famous Monsters* Forry Ackerman, who was kind to a fault as far as all manner of genre entries were concerned, voiced his displeasure concerning THE LOST WORLD. 'Nuff said.

DINOSAURUS (1960)

By the time of DINOSAURUS' release, I had already grown cynical of what Hollywood had been dishing out as dinosaur films. Having, that year, gone to the movie theater to see such fiascoes as THE LAND UNKNOWN and THE LOST WORLD, I was not predisposed to go out of my way to catch DINOSAURUS, especially after reading the dismal Dell Comic adaptation. The last thing a 10 year-old dinosaur fanatic wanted to see was a film about a 10-year-old dinosaur fanatic. The story's main character, Julio (played in the film by Alan Roberts), was obviously in the tradition of the wide-eyed runts I'd found so irritating in THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN, 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH, and THE BLACK SCORPION. According to the comic, Julio befriended a brontosaurus and rode atop its back like Alley Oop; later, the boy befriended Alley Oop, himself (or a caveman quite like him). Aside from a stereotypical human villain, the story's chief nemesis was a tyrannosaurus rex that scraps with the bronto before picking a fight with a more formidable opponent—a steam shovel. The steam shovel wins. I closed the comic. Not for me; I preferred my "dinosaures" straight, not diluted with comedy and corn.

Two decades would pass before I finally saw DINOSAURUS; when I did, I realized how discerning my 10 year old mind had actually been. Although shot in color and CinemaScope, and boasting the contributions of erstwhile Willis O'Brien collaborator and model-designer Marcel Delgado, DINOSAURUS is just so much drivel. The mind boggles to think that Alfred Bester and Algis Budrys—two major writers of adult science-fiction—were somehow involved in the genesis of the film's vapid script. Delgado's clunky dinosaur models are so rough-hewn that they give the appearance of being carved out of granite, and they are just about as lively. The animation is jerky, unconvincing, and altogether terrible, providing perhaps the single instance in which stop-motion dinosaurs proved to be inferior to live lizards. The only thing DINOSAURUS has in its favor, oddly enough, are the comic sequences featuring the caveman (well played by Alley-Oop look-alike, Gregg Martell), all

of which are well-timed and undeniably funny. This unexpectedly redeeming facet, however, cannot compensate for the film's worst offences

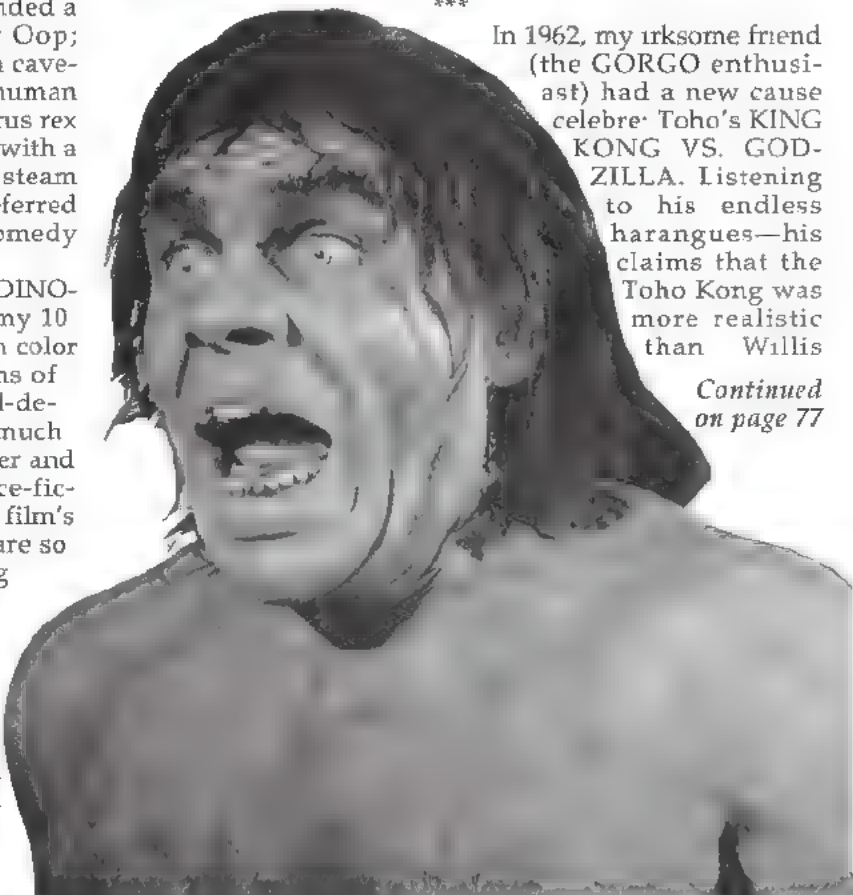
GORGO (1961)

GORGO was the final film in the Eugene Lourie dino trilogy and, though it has a large number of admirers, I must confess I have never been one of them. Sure, I was taken in by the splashy TV ad campaign but, even though I liked the imaginative design of the creature, I was able to recognize a dino suit when I saw one. I didn't see the film at a theater, partly because a friend of mine (one who happened to prefer Godzilla over King Kong, mind you!) raved so profusely about the film's merits that it put me off. We both read Monarch Books' nearly pornographic adaptation of GORGO, and when my friend assured me that none of that sexy stuff was in the movie, it just gave me one more reason not to go out of my way to see it. Within a couple of years, however, GORGO did find its way to (where else?) WOR-TV's MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE. Although I watched it, I felt some of that old resistance coming back. I remained unimpressed and, breaking my MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE tradition, I did not go back that week for a second helping.

Since then, I've tried to warm up to the film. I can appreciate that, of all the films in the Lourie trilogy, GORGO has the best story, the most interesting protagonists, the most spectacular scenes of destruction, and the most frenetic panicking-mob sequences, but I just can't get past that phony-looking, flap-jawed, rubber suit. I admit that it is one of the more successful examples of a man-in-a-dino-suit but, coming from me, that's faint praise. Need I add that I was, once again, annoyed by the inclusion of a dinosaur-loving juvenile (Vincent Winter) as a central character? Putting my obvious prejudices aside, though, I have to admit that GORGO is a major entry in the dino-film cycle, one which continues to please a large number of genre fans.

In 1962, my irksome friend (the GORGO enthusiast) had a new cause célèbre: Toho's KING KONG VS. GODZILLA. Listening to his endless harangues—his claims that the Toho Kong was more realistic than Willis

*Continued
on page 77*



Our Man on Baker Street

by David Stuart Davies

Elstree Studios is back in business. With amazing foresight, courage, and chutzpah, Boreham Wood Council have bought the old studios and set pictures in motion there once more. At present time, there is a Bill Murray spy comedy in production and later this year sets will be built for the next Bond movie. Elstree has a fine history and saw the production of such past gems as *NIGHT OF THE EAGLE*, *NIGHT OF THE DEMON*, all the Margaret Rutherford Miss Marple mysteries most of the Amicus horror movies, and dozens more.

On a cold but bright December day, I motored down there to join in the festivities to celebrate the return of Elstree. Actors and technicians associated with the studio had been invited along to witness the unveiling of plaques to commemorate three great forces in the British film industry: Elstree Studios itself, Hammer Films, and Peter Cushing.

As I mingled in the bar before the ceremonies commenced, I star spotted. There was Ron Moody of Fagin fame, along with his wife and a brood of young children; there was Barry Morse, well known as the detective in the television series *THE*

FUGITIVE, looking sprightly at 70-something (he told me that he had been approached to play Harrison Ford's father in the recent movie version of *THE FUGITIVE*, but had turned the idea down); there was William Lucas (*X THE UNKNOWN*); there were stalwart bit players of British comedies, Liz Fraser, Pat Coombs, and Lana Morris; I spied Peggy Cummings, star of *NIGHT OF THE DEMON*, and Peter Wyngarde, who kept his dark glasses and black baseball cap on the whole time, and there was one of the newer fellows: Nigel Hawthorne, looking not at all mad or like King George III. There was also a very tall gentleman of imposing aspect, sipping a pint of beer—but more of him later.

Unveiling time and Sylvia Sims, star of *ICE COLD IN ALEX*, came on stage to unveil the plaque to Elstree Studios. Now a matronly lady in her 60s, she gave a vibrant speech, thanking, in particular, the back room boys who helped make her "look good on screen." She ended by saying, "I loved working here at Elstree, even if they paid you shitty money!"

Then the tall, imposing beer drinker came to the microphone. His task was to unveil a plaque to his beloved friend Peter Cushing. It was Christopher Lee. At first, he talked with affection about Elstree and fondly remembered fluffing his lines on a take in the Hammer film *TASTE OF FEAR* when he saw, beyond the camera, Gary Cooper, who was filming on an adjacent set and had just wandered over. "My mind went to jelly. You see, to me at that time Gary Cooper was the movies."

Then it came time to talk about Peter Cushing.

"So much has been said about Peter over the years, during his lifetime and indeed after he left us, and there's not much more that I can add to what everybody already knows. Some of the prayers we say in church from time to time begin with the words 'dearly beloved.' If anyone was beloved, it was Peter. He wasn't just respected as an actor—and he was a wonderful actor, one of the finest I've ever seen—ev-



erybody loved him. And that is not an exaggeration. People in an industry not known for its bouquets—his peers, colleagues, actors and actresses, writers, producers, directors, all technicians in all the films—had a tremendous respect for Peter and they loved him. That is not an exaggeration. The word is love—and he was so full of love himself. I know it sounds as though I'm talking about someone on the verge of being canonized. In many ways, he was a very sauntly man. He was that rare thing: a truly good person."

Already a hush had descended upon the previously murmuring throng and more than a few eyes were moist at Lee's heartfelt and moving words. He talked briefly of Peter's final years and his courage in fighting his various illnesses. Lee also referred to Peter Cushing's great love for his wife, Helen, and how her death was the greatest blow of his life. "But," said Lee, "Peter was such a deeply religious man that it never crossed his mind to join her in the wrong way. He had a will of iron and he waited patiently to join her."

To lighten the mood, Lee told of a conversation that he had had with Vincent Price on this topic: "When we spoke on the telephone, Vincent would always ask, 'How's Peter?' On this occasion I said that he was not very well. Vincent observed that he was still waiting to join Helen. I said, 'Yes, he is. That will be the

Christopher Lee accepts an award honoring the late Peter Cushing.





Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing shared the screen with Neil McCallum, Edward Underdown, Roy Castle, and Donald Sutherland in the Amicus production of *DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS* (1964)

most important thing for him when he does . . . join Helen.' There was a pause at the end of the line and then Vincent said, 'What if she's out?' I told Vincent that was the most tasteless thing I've ever heard. I said I would pass this on. I used to talk to Peter roughly once a month, so the next time I rang him, I told him this story—because I knew I could. And he laughed and laughed and laughed. And then he said, 'Only Vincent could have thought of that and only you could have told me.'"

Lee went on to affirm that he couldn't, didn't, and wouldn't think of Peter as dead. "He is with me every day—and that is not an exaggeration. He left me a wonderful little snuff box of agate and there was a letter with it. It said, 'Dear fellow, I first used this box in *SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL* when I first appeared on stage with my beloved Helen, whom I shall see soon.' And the date on the letter was at least two or three years before he died. That really broke me up. As I said, to me he is still with me. I think of him all the time: his ridiculous jokes and the silly laughs we used to have all the time. He was a wonderful actor,

a wonderful man, a dear, dear friend. An OBE far too little and too late. Having received it, he promptly fell off his bicycle to avoid some dogs. I said to him in a letter that those initials do not stand for Old Bicyclist Ejected. It is a great honour, a great joy to dedicate this plaque to a true gentleman: Peter Cushing."

Lee's speech was given without notes and the odd catches in his voice told all too clearly that it came from the heart. Luckily, I was able to snatch a few words with him after the ceremony and asked if he, as a portrayer of Sherlock Holmes, had ever discussed the character with Peter. "Well, my real claim to fame with Sherlock Holmes is that I am the only actor to have played both Holmes brothers. Mycroft in *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* and Sherlock in several movies. Peter and I never really discussed the character, but I remember I used to pull his leg somewhat when we did *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, because he had a habit of raising his finger to me when he was warning me of something. I used to make fun about it on the set—just between ourselves, you

understand. He was very precise in his speech, particularly as Holmes. Of course, you have to be. There was one wonderful speech where he had to say, 'On no account, Sir Henry, are you to go out on the moor tonight.' I said to him after the first rehearsal that he ought to cut down on the consonants a little. He said, 'What do you mean?' 'Well,' I said, 'it sounds like' on no accountt, Sir Henry, are you tto go outt on the moor ttonightt.' Forever after, I used to quote these lines and they would send him off into gales of laughter."

The final plaque to be unveiled was to Hammer Films and this was carried out by the current owner of Hammer, Roy Skeggs, who pledged that Hammer would come back to Elstree. Sadly, we have heard similar affirmations before regarding Hammer—let's hope this time the story is true. Later, Skeggs told me that there were plans afoot to remake *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT* with Christopher Lee in the same role of the Count De Richlieu as the previous version. "He's now the right age for it."

Sounds interesting, but I won't hold my breath . . .

THE MASK OF FU MANCHU

A Production History

by Gregory William Mank

More Stars than the Heavens.

—Credited: MGM Studios, 1930s

The NEW! Sax Rohmer sensation! The Frankenstein of the Orient—and his devilish daughter—the love drug!

—The New York Times, 1932 publicity

Fu Manchu is an ugly, evil homo-
sexual with long black fingernails
while his daughter is a sadistic sex
fiend.

—Letter from the Japanese-
American Citizens League

...the most brilliant of
the modern world.

—Boris Karloff

MGM . . . Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer . . . Hollywood's grandest, gaudiest, most glorious studio. The holy sacristy of Garbo, the glamorous jungle of Leo the Lion.

Squat, bespectacled mogul Louis B. Mayer, former Brooklyn junk dealer; and frail, aesthetic "Boy Wonder" Irving Thalberg, former office boy to Universal's "Uncle Carl" Laemmle . . . together, these "Make-Believe Saints" (as late MGM story editor Samuel Marx called them) presented 1932 audiences with some of their most sensational movie memories:

GRAND HOTEL, with Garbo sighing to John Barrymore's left profile, "But I want to be alone" . . . RED DUST, with platinum blonde Jean Harlow flirting with Gable while bobbing naked in a rain barrel . . . TARZAN THE APE MAN, with Johnny Weissmuller fighting a gorilla monster in a pit . . . RASPUTIN AND THE EM PRESS, boasting all three Barrymores, climaxed by John maniacally assassinating Lionel and screaming "Get back in Hell!" as the Mad Monk rises bloody and chanting from the floor . . . Norma Shearer (aka Mrs. Thalberg), shot to death in her wedding gown by spurned lover Fredric March in SMILIN' THROUGH . . .

It all came true at MGM, 10202 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, California . . . pantheon of attractions from Marion Davies to Marie Dressler to Laurel and Hardy

And, during 1932, its Circus Maximus year, MGM released two classic horror pictures.

Tod Browning's infamous FREAKS lost money, shocked audiences, was the shame of the studio, and was sold off to an independent exhibitor—like a deformed baby abandoned on a doorstep.

Metro's second horror show of the year, THE MASK OF FU MANCHU, was a box-office success, starring Boris Karloff as a marvelous black mamba of a Fu, featuring Myrna Loy as his evil daughter Fah Lo See, and parading a bevy of resplendent torture devices with all of MGM's Barnum & Bailey brand of showmanship.

Come the Video Age, nearly 60 years later, MGM reconciled with its own long-forsaken FREAKS, releasing it to cable TV, even treating it to a tub thumped video release and going into the vaults to restore a finale not seen for decades.

A few years later, MGM released on video a cut version of THE MASK OF FU MANCHU

Why? Was it because of Karloff's gay, lisping dragon of a Fu Manchu, looking like a Carmen Miranda from Hell in his fruit-basket hat and five-inch fingernails? (See photo page XX.) Was it because of the wriggle of Myrna Loy as Fah, nympho daughter of Fu? Was it because of the spectacle of Lewis "Judge Hardy" Stone on a torturous seesaw, which lowers his venerable gray head into the jaws of grinning crocodiles? Was it because of the sight of Jean "Kindly Dr. Christian" Hersholt, gasping and sweating between spiked walls that slowly come to-

gether to perforate him? Was it because of the snakes? The tarantulas?

No . . . it was the "racism."

On Christmas Eve 1931, the studio was the scene of an astonishing orgy, which soon became an annual event. While Mayer drove home to the beach house and Irving Thalberg took off to dinner with Norma Shearer, Eddie Mannix, and Benny Thau spread it around that any man and woman could have as much booze as they wanted, and that they could choose a partner who appealed to them and make love against desks, on the floor, against the walls, anywhere they wanted.

A stranger wandering about in those sacred corridors of the executive building would have been able to see naked or partly dressed couples of all ages frenziedly copulating—even on Irving Thalberg's desk. (Mayer kept his office locked.) Some vigorous clerks serviced two or three women in succession. If this incident had leaked, it would have been the end of MGM.

—Charles Higham's
Merchant of Dreams
(Fine, 1993)

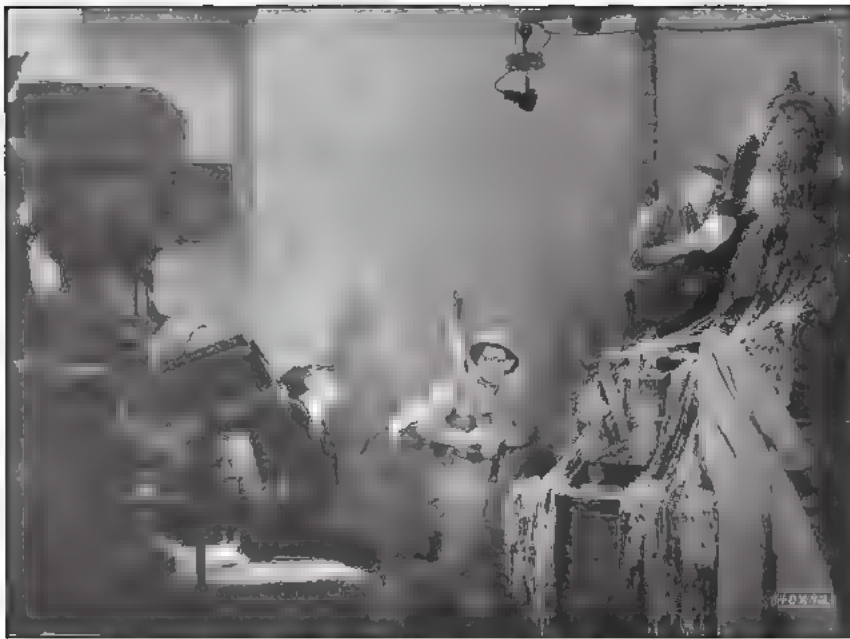


Before he became Charlie Chan, Warner Oland (right) was the Mysterious Dr. Fu Manchu in three Paramount features.

Goldwyn-Mayer. In fact, Chaney had been the last MGM great to make a sound picture: THE UNHOLY THREE opened on Broadway as a Fourth of July 1930 premiere.

"The Man of a Thousand Voices!" shouted the publicity. However, at 12:55AM, August 26, 1930, at St. Vincent's Hospital in Los Angeles, Lon Chaney—all thousand voices destroyed by throat cancer—died. Metro sent Chaney off to his anonymous crypt at Forest Lawn with an epic Hollywood funeral. The studio mourned him—especially after Universal made a mint via those two sensations of 1931, Bela Lugosi's DRACULA and Boris Karloff's FRANKENSTEIN . . .

Tod Browning, Lon Chaney's old director, had accepted Thalberg's challenge; on November 9, 1931, he had begun shooting FREAKS, the carnival shocker that former (and presumably pseudo) snake-eater Browning had long envisioned. From carnivals and circuses all over the country, the freaks came for the show. Mayer received a petition to shut down the film after Schlitz's, the



ABOVE: The cameras roll on MGM's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*. NEXT PAGE: As the Lord of the Si-Fan, Boris Karloff looks more like the Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat.

Pin-Head, whose true gender was a mystery (a dress was the usual attire), developed a crush on aghast Jackie Cooper, and F. Scott Fitzgerald bolted from the commissary to throw up after seeing Violet and Daisy Hilton, the famous Siamese Twins, perusing a menu.

Mayer had been aghast. The family-entertainment Republican saw *FREAKS* as yet another disturbing sign of the Roman Colosseum-style atmosphere of MGM that Thalberg seemed to indulge—an atmosphere so sensuous that even Jean Harlow had been offered an MGM pact.

Yet *FREAKS* had gone on; Browning finished it December 16, 1931. Retakes began December 23, 1931, the day before that orgy Higham so lovingly described. (There's no report as to whether or not the freaks got in on the action.) Despite cautious, post-preview cuts (one of the unkindest cuts, reputedly, being the freaks' castration of Cleopatra's strong man lover, Hercules, played by Henry Victor, glimpsed in the original finale in the same freak show as Chicken Woman Cleopatra; he was now fat and singing in falsetto), and a revised "happy" ending, *FREAKS* went on to infamy.

Final cost: \$310,607.37. Shooting Days: 36. Release date: February 20, 1932. Overall critical reaction: horror, outrage, and a 30-year ban in England.

Financial loss: \$164,000.

So, on this Sunday, August 7, 1932, MGM took a fast \$50,000 from Dwain Esper, an independent exhibitor, who got *FREAKS* on a 25-year distribution deal, and would milk the scandalous picture (under such titles as *NATURE'S MISTAKES*) for all of its sensationalism.

Mayer was relieved; *FREAKS* had been one of the great failures and embarrassments in the history of MGM. Yet the Babylon aura still permeated the Culver City studio. In its desire to be supreme in every genre, MGM already was making a new horror picture, which had just starting shooting the day before Mayer sold away *FREAKS*.

This one would attack a new "defenseless minority group", the Chinese race.

"Little by little that night, and on many more nights, I built up Dr. Fu Manchu until I could both hear him and see him . . . I seemed to hear a sibilant voice saying, 'It is your belief that you have made me. It is mine that I shall live when you are smoke.'"

—Sax Rohmer

MGM proclaimed that, by 1932, one hundred million readers had thrilled to the nefarious exploits of Fu Manchu—"The Yellow Peril" branchchild of Sax Rohmer (aka Arthur Henry Sarsfield Ward, 1883-1959). One night, in an alley in London's Chinatown, Fleet Street journalist Rohmer had spied on a mysterious Chinese man, whom he believed was the kingpin of a dope-smuggling coven; the memory inspired the author's two short stories and 13 novels about the diabolic, torture-loving, gloriously mad Fu Manchu. As Rohmer described his arch-villain in the first novel, *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu* (1913):

Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect . . . Imagine that awful being, and you have a mental picture of Dr. Fu Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man.

Fu's stiff upper lip adversaries were Sir Denis Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard, and Smith's trusty familiar, Dr. Petrie, who narrated the early tales. A real-life adversary was the Chinese government, who pleaded with Rohmer to kill off Fu Manchu in the interest of international image. Rohmer did so, but the author (who loved posing in Oriental robes and smoking a pipe à la Sherlock Holmes) couldn't resist bringing Fu back from two different demises to vow again the destruction of the white race. The author would write Fu Manchu thrillers for over 40 years; the last novel, *Emperor Fu Manchu*, was published in 1959.

Fu was an actor's dream. Harry Agar Lyons played him in the British 15-chapter serial *THE MYSTERY OF DR. FU MANCHU* (Stoll, 1923); A. E. Coleby produced and directed, and the cast included Fred Paul as Smith and H. Humberstone Wright as Petrie. The same company got together for the 15-chapter *THE FURTHER MYSTERIES OF FU MANCHU* in 1924, with Paul not only reprising Smith, but adapting and directing the cliffhanger. Fu Manchu also took to the U. S. radio airwaves, as Arthur Hughes played the devil doctor in a series of 12-chapter serials on Radio's *THE COLLIER HOUR* in 1927.

It was Warner Oland (1880-1938) who first scored in Hollywood as Fu Manchu in Paramount's "All-Talking" *THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU* in 1929. The film is a fun curiosity today, with its talent force of director Rowland V. Lee; Jean Arthur as Lia, Fu's evil Caucasian ward; O. P. Heggie as Nayland Smith, and Neil Hamilton as John, whose love redeems Lia. The film was a hit. As played by the Swedish, slanted-eyebrowed Oland, Fu Manchu was a deadly (but rather bovine) menace, a lethal relative to Charlie Chan, whom Oland would play

so winningly for Fox—and rather sympathetic. Paramount, as if perceiving racial troubles decades away, was careful to give Fu a motivation for his mania: his wife and son had been slain during the Boxer Rebellion. Hence Fu's hatred of the white race—and hence Oland's handdog performance in *THE MYSTERIOUS DR. FU MANCHU*, and the two Paramount sequels that followed: 1930's *THE RETURN OF DR. FU MANCHU* and 1931's *DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON* (in which the real star of the show was Anna May Wong as Fu's daughter, Princess Ling Moy).

MGM, lusting for the mad, almighty Fu Manchu of the Sax Rohmer novels, would change all that.

"A new Fu Manchu . . . not to be confused with the Fu Manchu of other pictures!" Metro's copy would proclaim as the studio nailed down the rights to Rohmer's latest opus, *The Mask of Fu Manchu*. *Colliers* magazine was serializing the melodrama, from May 7 through July 23, 1932 (with Rohmer reaping a reported \$30,000); MGM plotted a fall movie release, just as Rohmer's 330-page novel would hit the bookstores (via Doubleday & Doran). Unlike the disastrous *FREAKS*, MGM was now marketing a bogey man with proven appeal in novels, radio, and movies; it was all showmanship with a vengeance.

On July 19, 1932, MGM publicity chief Howard Strickling, with the blessing of Louis B. Mayer, promised the world that Metro Goldwyn Mayer would now "go all out for sex"—and indeed, it would be a major spice of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

To guarantee the sensation, MGM announced only one Hollywood star worthy of the role of Fu Manchu: Metro would borrow Boris Karloff—Frankenstein's Monster himself—from Universal City. Deep in the MGM archives, an August 4, 1932 contract reveals Metro's engagement (via Universal Pictures Corp.) of Karloff. The star, fresh in the triumph of *FRANKENSTEIN*, having completed *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* (set for October release), looking forward to Universal's *THE MUMMY*, received a Metro \$3,500 guarantee. It was a pivotal role for Boris. In *FRANKENSTEIN*, the actor had growled, howled and screamed; in *THE OLD DARK HOUSE*, he had madly gurgled; in *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, he would use his hisping voice for the first time to scare the crowds.

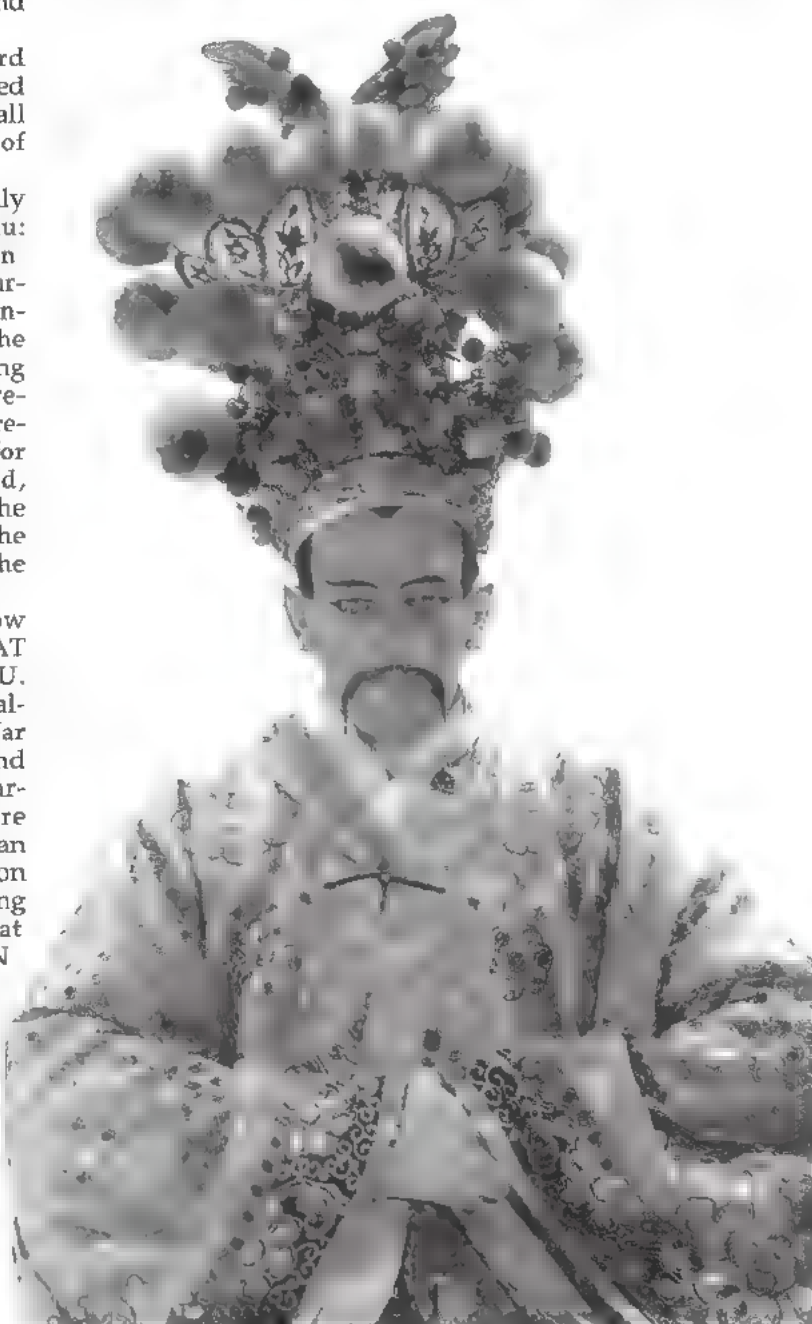
Hunt Stromberg, whose most famous Metro show would be 1936's Best Picture Oscar winning *THE GREAT ZIEGFELD*, produced *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*. MGM's "good guys" for the movie included three real-life heroes: an ex-officer from the Spanish American War (MGM's own Lewis Stone, who played Sir Nayland Smith); a former Dartmouth football star (Charles Starrett, who played hero Terry Granville); and a future founder of the Motion Picture Relief Fund (Metro's Jean Hersholt, who took the part of archaeologist Prof. Von Berg). Two Metro "featured ladies" filled out the leading roles: Karen Morley, who already in 1932 had acted at MGM with the Barrymore brothers in *ARSENE LUPIN* and with Garbo in *MATA HARI*, played heroine Sheila Barton, while Myrna Loy (who, reportedly, had been considered for the Baclanova role in *FREAKS*) would be Fu's "devilish daughter," Fah Lo See. (Rohmer had introduced this temptress in 1931's *Daughter of Fu Manchu* with the name Fah Lo Suee; MGM, possibly fearing the response of pig farmers in the audience, made the adjustment.)

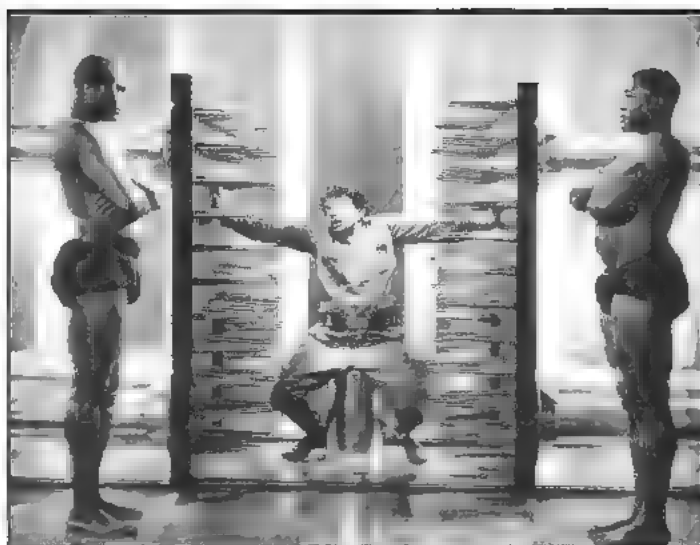
To direct, Metro assigned 32-year old, Budapest-born Charles Vidor, formerly of the Austro-Hungarian

Army. Vidor would direct everything from Rita Hayworth stripteasing to "Don't Put the Blame on Mame" in *GILDA* (1946) to Danny Kaye singing "Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen" in *HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN* (1952). *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* would be his directorial debut.

Behind the camera, capturing the exotic look of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, was Tony Gaudio (1885-1951), later star cinematographer for Warner Bros., where he would win the Academy Award for his work on *ANTHONY ADVERSE* (1936).

The atmosphere at MGM was becoming delirious. On August 2, 1932, as *FU MANCHU* neared its starting date, Metro began shooting the jungle melodrama *KONGO*, a remake of the Lon Chaney/Tod Browning 1927 silent *WEST OF ZANZIBAR*. Walter Huston starred as "Dead-Legs," who hopes to avenge himself on the man who crippled him (C. Henry Gordon) by transforming the man's daughter (Virginia Bruce) from a convent virgin to a brandy-addicted whore; of course, she turns out to be Dead-Legs' own daughter. The \$160,000 production featured such sideshows as Huston preparing to yank





THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932) is best known for its elaborate and cruel torture devices (used here on Lawrence Grant and Jean Hersholt). If only Louis B. Mayer had used the same mechanisms on Andy Hardy . . .

out Lupe Velez's tongue with a wire, and Conrad Nagel purging his dope addiction in a swamp of thirsty leeches.

Meanwhile, THE MASK OF FU MANCHU had no finished script. If Universal's Karloff expected fastidious production at the great MGM, he got a big surprise:

"I shall never forget, about a week before we started, I kept asking for a script—and I was met with roars of laughter at the idea that there would be a script!"

On August 1, 1932, producer Stromberg had begun dictating the storyline, scatter-shooting plots, tortures, and melodrama which Irene Kuhn, John Willard, and Edgar Allan Woolf would tackle over the next two and a half months of production. The MGM Collection at University of Southern California features at least 20 of these off-the-cuff inspirations from Stromberg, who set the tone of the show:

FAH LO SEE'S BOUDOIR. Sees Fah Lo See leering. Sheila draws back in horror. She could have almost stood anything but this—death for Terry would have been better—but this idea of sex creeping in—the fact that he has slept with this Chinese girl—that would serve to arouse any woman who has loved a man.

On Saturday, August 6, 1932, THE MASK OF FU MANCHU began shooting.

Say, this is obscene!

—Myrna Loy

Leo growls. THE MASK OF FU MANCHU unspools its credits, with creepy (and uncredited) Oriental music. The credits proclaim it an MGM/Cosmopolitan Production—Cosmopolitan being the unit camped at MGM by William Randolph Hearst, primarily to showcase his famous par amour, Marion Davies

Night in London. The quarters of Scotland Yard's Sir Nayland Smith. He has sent for Sir Lionel Barton.

"I want to ask you a very funny question," says Smith.

Gray-fringed, poker-faced Lewis Stone (1879-1953) is Sir Nayland, after Lionel Barrymore, he was Mayer's most adored actor. The ever-venerable Stone (who had

gone gray at age 20) costarred in 10 MGM 1932 releases, sharing the screen with Harlow in RED-HEADED WOMAN, with Garbo in MATA HARI, with Crawford in LETTY LYNTON, and with Garbo and Crawford in GRAND HOTEL (one of his best roles as scar-faced Dr. Otternschlag). Of course, the sombre Stone was fated to be hearth-and-home icon Judge James Hardy in the Mickey Rooney Andy Hardy opi (Mayer's favorite product); as such, Stone's casting as Nayland Smith is, retrospectively, all the more enjoyable (and campy) here.

Smith: Sir Lionel, the British government is asking you to risk your life again.

Barton (cheerfully): Oh! Very well!

Lawrence Grant (1870-1952), who had played in Paramount's DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON (and later was the Burgomaster in Universal's 1939 SON OF FRANKENSTEIN and 1942 THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN) makes a keen old rover boy of Sir Lionel, who has a mission: to lead archaeologists to the Gobi Desert tomb of Genghis Khan, claiming the tyrant's golden mask and scimitar before it falls into the clutches of Fu.

Smith. Should Fu Manchu put that mask across his wicked eyes, and take that scimitar into his bony, cruel hands, all Asia rises. He'll declare himself Genghis Khan come to life again and he'll lead hundreds of millions of men to sweep the world!

At the British Museum, Sir Lionel meets his archaeologists, including McLeod (David Torrence) and bespectacled Prof. Von Berg (Jean Hersholt, 1886-1956). Hersholt was a Copenhagen-born character actor, who played everything from the heavy of von Stroheim's GREED (1924) to "Kindly Dr. Christian" of the RKO series. Then under Metro contract (and another alumnus of GRAND HOTEL, as Sent the porter), Hersholt was a great humanitarian, who won special Oscars for his real-life role as a major founder of the Motion Picture Relief Fund; the Academy established the "Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award" after his demise

That Fu Manchu is also after the treasures of Genghis Khan's tomb hardly intimidates Hersholt's Von Berg ("A Chinaman beat me? He couldn't do it!") How-

ever, in the caskets, "mummies" stir—and they kidnap Sir Lionel . . .

Sir Nayland breaks the news to Barton's daughter Sheila (Karen Morley) and her beau, Terry Granville (Charles Starrett). The blonde Miss Morley, memorable as Paul Muni's flashy moll "Poppy" in *SCARFACE* (1932), was a fine, all-purpose leading lady at MGM; making her first appearance in a mournful dark suit and hat, she plays the heroine on a shrill note of soignée hysteria. Starrett (best remembered as Columbia's "The Durango Kid") stands stolidly by (in a role one that MGM reader suggested as ideal for Clark Gable).

"You know what they say about him in the East!" barnstorms Miss Morley of Fu, as if she believed there might be an Academy Award in the role of Sheila. "His cruelty, his unspeakable tortures!"

The Gobi Desert lair of Fu Manchu. The opulent MGM set, masterminded by Cedric Gibbons, is a mix of fairy-tale castle, Frankensteinian laboratory, and Oriental whorehouse. And here we meet Dr. Fu Manchu—Karloff. The introductory closeup is marvelous; Fu, his face monstrously reflected into a mandarin-moustached gargoyle on a great hanging mirror, grinning satanically and quaffing an unholy, smoking vial.

Boris had to leave his Toluca Lake bungalow very early in the morning to arrive at MGM for the grueling two-and-a-half-hour makeup job—applied by the late, great Cecil Holland Remembered Karloff

In *FU MANCHU* I had to speak lines. This meant I could not use any of the many types of false teeth which were such potent parts of disguise in silent days. Lon Chaney once told me speech had made impossible about 50 of his best makeup devices. In *FU MANCHU* we used some thin shell teeth that covered the front of the natural teeth only. Slanting eyebrows, which usually can be simulated by a strip of thin membrane that is cemented to the skin and then painted, bind the muscles of the face and make speech impossible. So we used two tiny celluloid clips instead.

One of the most notorious features of the makeup (along with the pointed ears and false eyelashes, of course) were the long fingernails, and MGM publicity regaled the prurient with tales of how Boris couldn't "scratch himself" while affecting these fabulous fakes. The mind boggles at the other prosaic necessities which must have been impossible when Karloff was in full Fu Manchu regalia.

A crash of musical gong chimes, and minions drag in Sir Lionel, who has been drugged for days. "You're Fu Manchu, aren't you?" sneers the Britisher. Karloff lisps one of his many joyously memorable lines:

Fu Manchu I'm a doctor of philosophy from Edinburgh. I'm a doctor of law from Christ's College. I'm a doctor of medicine from Harvard. My friends, out of courtesy, call me Doctor!

One wonders how many 1932 audiences, noticing Karloff's famous lisp for the first time, felt he was affecting the "hiss" as Fu Manchu!

Sir Lionel refuses an offer of one million pounds to divulge the location of Khan's tomb, so Fu offers his daughter Fah Lo See (Myrna Loy).

"Even my daughter," Karloff pimps passionately "Even that for you!"

Fah Lo See . . . 27 year old Myrna Loy. The Montana born, pert-nosed redhead was then one of Hollywood's most lethal screen vamps; MGM had just loaned her to RKO to play the Javaness/Indian half-caste who slays her patronizing white schoolmates in *THIRTEEN WOMEN*. In her memoir *Myrna Loy: Being and Becoming*

(written with James Kotsilibas-Davis, Knopf, 1987), the actress, who five years after *FU MANCHU* was voted "Queen of Hollywood," wrote:

Metro then tossed me into *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* as Fah Lo See, the nefarious daughter of the title character, played by Boris Karloff. That script was really the last straw . . . I'd been reading Freud, and apparently the writers hadn't. "I can't do this," I told our producer, Hunt Stromberg. "I've done a lot of terrible things in films, but this girl's a sadistic nymphomaniac."

"What's that?" he said.

"Well, you better find out, because that's what she is and I won't play her that way." I did play her, of course, there was nothing I could do about it. But Hunt Stromberg was no fool; he simply hadn't been reading Freud. He did some re-

search, and in the end the character's worst excesses were toned down. She wasn't Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.

Sir Lionel wants nothing to do with a sadistic nymphomaniac (at least not a Chinese one), so he soon finds himself tied to a slab under *FU MANCHU* torture number one: The Great Bell.

Fu Manchu. The Torture of the Bell . . . Just a bell ringing—but the percussion and the repercussion of sound against your eardrums will soften and destroy them, until the sound is magnified a thousand times. You can't move . . . you can't sleep . . . you will be frantic with thirst . . . you will be unspeakably fou! But here you will lie, day after day until you tell!



"He is not entirely unhandsome, is he, my father?" "For a white man, no." Myrna Loy, Charles Starrett, and Boris Karloff form an unlikely menage a trois.

The bell begins to peal. And Karloff's Fu Manchu lopes away, in sadistic bliss . . .

Karloff, with his false eyelashes, Adrian-designed gowns, dragon lady fingernails, and lisp, come-hither delivery, has created a wild, kinky, archfiend of a Fu; part Yellow Peril, part Frederick's of Hollywood. Yet saving the performance (and assuring its taste) is a wonderful, crazy, bravura humor in Karloff's acting. As Myrna Loy wrote:

... Boris and I brought some feeling and humor to those comic book characters. Boris was a fine actor, a professional who never condescended to his often unworthy material

The film keeps returning to that bell . . . we see Fu Manchu merrily running a bouquet of grapes over Sir Lionel's delirious face . . . Later, Fu returns to give a drink to his "guest"—which Sir Lionel spews out .

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," laughs Karloff, grinning from pointed ear to pointed ear, stroking Grant's hair. "It was salt!"

MGM's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* pressbook hailed "The Great Feast of the Mongols" as one of the film's "dramatic thrills," and it does survive as one of the movie's best noots. In a banquet hall, two warriors fight with swords as reclining Mongols stuff their faces and Karloff, in pagoda style hat, grins appreciatively at the warriors' half-naked bodies

Fu Manchu: I have brought you here for great tidings! I am the most unfortunate of men. I have no son to follow me. Therefore, in shame, I ask you to receive a message from my ugly and insignificant daughter!

Like the intro to a crazy Busby Berkeley number, an army marches in, does a brisk left face to the camera, separates—and there is Fah Lo See. (When Myrna Loy received an honorary Oscar in 1991, the Academy Awards telecast featured this closeup in its homage to the actress.) After the camera dutifully surveys the leers of the Mongols, Fah Lo See delivers:

Fah Lo See: I have seen a vision. The prophecy is about to be fulfilled. Genghis Khan . . . comes back to us! I see the vision of countless hordes swarming to recapture the world. I see them victorious. I hear the shouts of the dead and the dying drowned by the victorious shouts of our people. Genghis Khan comes back. Genghis Khan leads the East against the world!

Meanwhile the archaeologists' band has arrived in the Gobi Desert and discovered the tomb. Even these scenes of "the good guys" move with color and pace. Terry removes the golden mask from the skeleton of Genghis Khan—and a tarantula wriggles in the eye socket of the decayed tyrant's skull. There is the murder of McLeod, staged with acrobatics worthy of the big top, as a Fu minion swings along a high wire by night, from tree to mosque, to throw a knife in McLeod's back; the explorer dies, but lives long enough to shoot his assassin, who falls screaming to the ground. And, in an especially grisly shot, as Terry sits under a tree, a dismembered hand (Sir Lionel's, naturally) falls from the branches, nearly beaming the hero on the head. Meanwhile, Sir Nayland has joined the group, spewing white supremacist lines and paranoia.

Smith: Will we ever understand these Eastern races? . . . Do you suppose for a moment Fu Manchu doesn't know we have a beautiful white girl here with us? . . . He knows everything, he knows every move we make, his spies are all around us, I can't even trust our own coolies . . .

Meanwhile, Terry, to soothe Sheila's Old Vic outbursts, decides to bargain with Fu Manchu: he will give him the Genghis Khan sword, before Sir Lionel loses any more body parts, in exchange for Fu Manchu's returning to Sheila her beloved (and mostly intact) father. Little does Terry know that Smith has buried the genuine sword with McLeod, leaving a facsimile. Equipped with the pseudo-sword, Terry visits the palace of Fu Manchu.

The result, whether the cast, director, and writers were aware of it or not, is one of the most outrageous "phallic" vignettes in movie history.

"What can one so poor as Dr. Fu Manchu do for you?" flirts Karloff, reading the line for all its ridiculous rhythm. As Fu Manchu and Fah Lo See watch eagerly, stalwart Starrett slowly pulls out his giant "sword" and the camera cuts to Miss Loy, cooing and waving her hands in delight at the



"sword's" size! Not to be outdone, Karloff grabs the sword, clutching it passionately—"Genghis Khan!" he ejaculates soulfully. Then he thrusts the sword, striking "macho" poses with it . . .

The sword must undergo a test—an electrical ray, designed for the movie by Kenneth Strickfaden, who had masterminded Karloff's "creation" in the spectacular laboratory effects of FRANKENSTEIN. Smiling satanically, Fu subjects the sword to the lightning ray—and it sparks, and melts, and shrivels . . .

"You accursed son of a white dog" shrieks Karloff.

Minions drag off poor Terry. They hang him from a ceiling, strip him half-naked, and whip him. Fah Lo See, of course, watches. "Ahi!" squeals Fah. "Faster! Faster! Faster . . . !" Fu plays voyeur, grinning at the sadism from a window above . . .

Naturally, poor, whipped, unconscious Terry ends up in the "oh-if-walls-could-talk" boudoir of Fah Lo See, where his muscular body lies sprawled on her bed. As daughter paws over him, father pays a visit:

Fah: He is not entirely unhandsome, is he, my father?

Fu Manchu: For a white man, no

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is having trouble with two of its current films, the all-Barrymore RASPUTIN and THE MASK OF FU MANCHU . . .

—*New York Times*, August 28, 1932

Now . . . if, at this point, any reader finds THE MASK OF FU MANCHU awful, or revolting, or simply silly, ponder this: the version discussed is Metro's second version of the same project—with the same cast!

Come mid-August of 1932, MGM brass began looking at the rushes of THE MASK OF FU MANCHU—and were appalled. Fearful of another FREAKS, the front of fice shut down production #640. ". . . the Chinese picture has been halted," reported the *New York Times*, "while the story is being rewritten, several of the writers having been formed into a shock troop to get something filmable out in a hurry."

To make a clean break, MGM fired director Charles Vidor, canning him from what was to have been his Hollywood directorial debut. Reportedly, most (if not all) of what Vidor had shot was scrapped; the shooting would begin all over again. Vidor's career fell into limbo, languishing for over a year until he landed his next directing job, SENSATION HUNTERS (1934), for Monogram.

Meanwhile, there was trouble on the set of RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS. Lionel, as black-bearded Rasputin, was growling that brother John was stealing their scenes. John, so tightly corseted into his uniforms as Prince Paul that he couldn't sit down, was drinking heavily, and trying to seduce young Jean Parker, who was playing one of the princesses. Ethel was Ethel. Bored by moviemaking, worried that she might not finish the film in time to return East for a stage engagement, Miss Barrymore one day went to the stage phone, called Louis B. Mayer, and announced so all on the soundstage could hear:

"See here, Mayer, let's get rid of this Brahbin or Braybin or what's-his-name."

His name was Charles Brabin (1883-1957), and as Richard Boleslavski took over RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS, Brabin took over THE MASK OF FU MANCHU. Liverpool-born Brabin's directorial career dated back to



Following in the Fu-steps of Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee played the Devil Doctor in THE FACE OF FU MANCHU (1965) and four other films, Henry Brandon starred in the 1940 serial THE DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, and Glen Gordon (pictured with Laurette Luez) starred in the short-lived ADVENTURES OF FU MANCHU on television in 1956.



ABOVE: THE MASK OF FU MANCHU's sexual sleight-of-hand resulted in Terry Granville (future cowboy star Charles Starrett, and nominally the macho hero) filling the bill as the movie's "damsel-in-distress." Here, Terry suffers the wrath of the Yellow Peril Incarnate (Boris Karloff) and his nymphomaniacal daughter (Myrna Loy) when he tries to palm off the phony phallid—pardon us, sword—of Genghis Khan. NEXT PAGE: Sir Denis Nayland Smith (Lewis Stone) is shocked to find that ol' Devil Doc, Fu Manchu, humiliating poor Terry by forcing him to wear Pampers.

the 1914 Edison serial *THE MAN WHO DISAPPEARED*, he had recently directed Jean Harlow's debut as an MGM star in 1932's gangster saga, *THE BEAST OF THE CITY*. Brabin himself was no doubt disgusted by this kind of studio politics: he had been fired from MGM's 1926 spectacular *BEN-HUR* and replaced by Fred Niblo; losing *RASPUTIN AND THE EMPRESS* was his second great career humiliation. Brabin would retire (at age 51) after the studio's *A WICKED WOMAN* (1934), happily married to screen vamp Theda Bara (whom he had directed in silents), living quietly until his death in Santa Monica in November 1957.

Meanwhile, the "shock troop" of writers working on the FU script included Edgar Allan Woolf (a Metro contract writer who contributed to such Metro films as *FREAKS* and *THE WIZARD OF OZ*), John Willard (author of the venerable melodrama *THE CAT AND THE CANARY*), and Irene Kuhn—who, based on available data, never worked on another picture!

Then, just as *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* was beginning anew, a real life horror/sex melodrama erupted—right in the midst of the MGM Studios.

It's amazing that the censors didn't burn Jean Harlow at the stake, red wig, black garter belt, fishnet stockings, and all, after MGM released *RED-HEADED WOMAN* on June 25, 1932. Metro's "scandalous" comedy made Production Code history: "Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively." And in the wake of *RED-HEADED WOMAN*, Thalberg's brilliant producer Paul Bern, supervisor of *GRAND HOTEL*, co-supervisor of *RED-HEADED WOMAN*, died of a gunshot to the head after midnight of Labor Day, 1932.

Sixty-five days after his July 2, 1932 marriage to Jean Harlow.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was a circus. Mayer, Thalberg, and PR chief Howard Strickling (but *not* Harlow) were all at the newlyweds' Bavarian hideaway, 9820 Easton Drive, high in Benedict Canyon, early the next morning—where they beheld the naked body of the 42-year-old Bern, sprawled in the bedroom, drenched in

Harlow's Mitsouko perfume, with this infamous note nearby

Dearest Dear/ Unfortunately this is the only way to make good the frightful wrong I have done you and to wipe out my abject humiliation/I love you—Paul. You realize that last night was only a comedy.

Harlow probably had spent the night at her mother's. Mayer took control. Legend would claim Bern blew his brains out, humiliated over his impotence, and that his alluded "comedy" was a pathetic attempt to bed MGM's Platinum Blonde while sporting a dildo.

However! *Deadly Illusion: Jean Harlow and the Murder of Paul Bern* (Random House, 1990), by Thalberg's now-late story editor Samuel Marx and Joyce Vanderveen, argues that MGM fabricated the impotence saga to protect Harlow; that Bern was actually murdered by Dorothy Millette, his common-law wife; that, after years in a Connecticut sanitarium, Dorothy had come to Hollywood a raving religious lunatic, vengefully confronted Bern with his bigamy—and maniacally demanded he star her in a religious epic. The authors argue that, while Jean was away, Dorothy was at the house that night, shrieking on the Japanese lantern-lit patio, gobbling devil's food cake that had been saved for Jean, taking a dip in the pool with Paul, shooting him in the head in the bedroom, unleashing an "unearthly scream" heard by his housekeeper, and escaping in the limousine Bern had called MGM for at 1:04 AM to drive a woman to San Francisco.

Two nights later, Dorothy Millette jumped off the Delta King steamboat and drowned herself in the Sacramento River.

"This is the most terrible moment in the history of our company!" howled Mayer to his producers, fearing the scandal could bring on the downfall of MGM. And Harlow was in the midst of filming a new picture—*RED DUST*, with Gable and Mary Astor.

RED DUST's supervisor was Hunt Stromberg—the same man producing *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

Following Paul Bern's cremation, where MGM staff mysteriously and fanatically guarded the body, Jean Harlow (affectionately known at the studio as "The Baby") bravely returned to the set of *RED DUST* only to collapse.

Hunt Stromberg certainly had his hands full. On September 9, he was back to dictating ideas for *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*. The studio that announced its plan to "go all out for sex" was having it blow up in its face, professionally and personally. As Stromberg coped with the Metro hysteria, the day-to-day condition of Harlow, and the melodrama on the *RED DUST* set, his "other" film went on shooting . . .

Fu minions deliver Sir Lionel's body, a dragon tattooed on his head, giving Miss Morley a new chance for hysterics . . . Sir Nayland, who has the real sword of Genghis Khan, takes off for the House of 10,000 Joys, which he thinks leads to Fu Manchu . . . at "the House," we get a tour of an opium den, a musical comedy number from a Chinese floozie, and a fire, courtesy of Sir Nayland, as he penetrates the lair of Fu Manchu. The Yellow Peril aims a gun at Sir Nayland's back in a cave of vipers, a snake slithering at Sir Nayland's feet.

"Is this a friend of your family's?" deadpans Sir Nayland.

Fu Manchu leads his enemy to see the half-naked hero at the mercy of Fah Lo See. Fu explains his plan to inject a serum into Terry, to control his will—"so much better than hypnotism."

"I see—another of your Oriental tricks," sneers Sir Nayland. "In the name of the British government, I demand the release of this boy!"

"British government! I'll wipe them and the whole accursed white race off the face of the earth when I get the sword and mask . . .!"

Fu promises to show Sir Nayland the sword himself. "Just before I dispatch you to your cold, saintly, Christian paradise!" And, as Nayland is dragged off, Fu leers over Terry, stroking his super fingernails over the naked torso.

The operation begins. Fu, in surgical mask and gown, dominates his stark laboratory, where lizards and reptiles wriggle out of their crystal test tubes—and our hero lies strapped to a table. Fu's loinclothed minions stand by, strangely glistening, for all the world, like Oscar statues (which perhaps isn't all that surprising; Cedric Gibbons, the movie's scenic designer, also designed Oscar for the Academy). The doctor extracts poison from a tarantula . . . a giant snake is pulled up from a trapdoor, its fangs aimed by two slaves like a knife, and shoved into a hapless sacrifice . . . the poison is extracted from the dying victim of the snake . . .

Fu Manchu: This serum, distilled from dragon's blood, my own blood, the organs of different reptiles, and mixed with a magic brew of the Sacred Seven Herbs, will temporarily change you into the living instrument of my will. You will do as I com-

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Record Rack

by Ross Care

"I was born in the shadow of the studios of Hollywood . . ."

Jerry Goldsmith

Passion: repressed, full tilt down and dirty, transcendent, bitter-sweet: before it was a Stephen Sondheim musical, it used to be what film music was all about. Passion for a place, a period, but most of all, in the late Golden Age of films and film music, the 1950s, emotional, sexual passion. In the era from 1950 to (circa) 1965, composers such as Alex North, Elmer Bernstein, Kenyon Hopkins, and Bernard Herrmann created some of the most intensely sensual music ever written. Many of these torrid cues subliminally (yet with a paradoxical graphicness) illustrated what period censorship—which, in retrospect, seems rather more like good taste—would not allow on-screen Hollywood's musical passion and emotion ran the gamut from the raw to the rarefied, evoking what was really going on both externally and introspectively during those discreet, customary, and sometimes abrupt '50s fades and blackouts, the animalistic rape of Blanche DuBois in *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* (1951), the more cerebral, repressed passions of Miss Alma Winemiller in *SUMMER AND SMOKE* (1961), the earthy sensuality of Erskine Caldwell's *GOD'S LITTLE ACRE* (1958), even the passionate bloodlust of Count Dracula and other creatures for their respective brides and/or other incompatible, but not so obscure, objects of desire.

Perhaps it's a sign of the times, but in the annals of current film music, one of the most lyrical motifs composed for a recent film is Bruce Broughton's sensitive theme for Chance and Delilah in 1993's *HOMEWARD BOUND*. (Chance and Delilah happen to be two dogs!) And, needless to say, the concept of a "Love Theme" from last year's *TWISTER* or *INDEPENDENCE DAY* is oxymoronic.

During the long golden twilight of the studio system, an important new composer emerged on the Hollywood scene. Inspired at an impressionable age by a screening of Hitchcock's *SPELLBOUND* with its over-the-top, hyper-romantic (and never soft-pedaled) Miklos Rozsa score, and grounded in radio and television, the composer was Jerry Goldsmith. Goldsmith became one of the most versatile of the era's

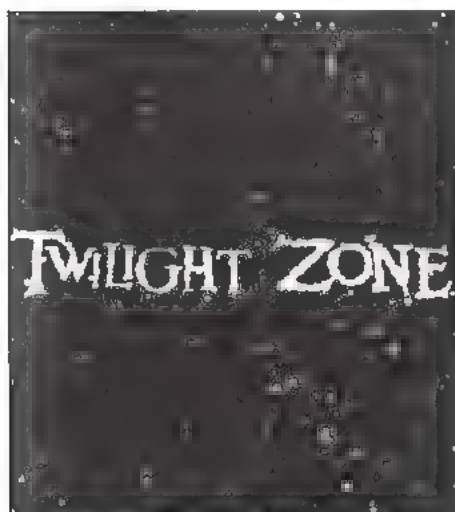


composers, versed in both pop and 20th-century concert music styles and trends. However, he was (and is) also an enduring link to the passion and romantic lyricism of the old Hollywood, especially in a period that witnessed a post-studio renaissance of innovative "tradition of quality" filmmaking (the late '60s and early/m.d-'70s). Goldsmith is one of the few film composers actually born and raised in Los Angeles. Still, his first job was not in music, but as a clerk at CBS in 1950. Once there, though, he soon gained entry

into the music department and extensive experience scoring for both radio and television, profiting from the kind of invaluable working apprenticeship that is virtually impossible to obtain today. Among the shows to which Goldsmith contributed were *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* (including its famous "The Invaders" segment), *THRILLER*, and *THE MAN FROM U. N. C. L. E.* Among his earliest major film scores was John Huston's biopic, *FREUD* (1962), one of Goldsmith's many excursions into wedding traditional orchestral sounds to electronic, 12-tone, and serialized techniques.

The '60s were a particularly rich period for the composer, who produced substantial, eclectically varied, and durably stirring scores for such motion pictures as Preminger's *IN HARM'S WAY* (1965), *STAGECOACH*, and *THE BLUE MAX* (both 1966), and Franklin Schaffner's classic biopic, *PATTON* (1970). Though Goldsmith curiously tends to de-emphasize his cinefantastique credits, the same decade also heard such unabashed genre scores as *THE SATAN BUG* (1965) and *SECONDS* (1966), climaxing with the arguably definitive *PLANET OF THE APES* (1968). The composer also lent a subtle, partially 12-tone ambiance to the unfortunately pedestrian film version of Ray Bradbury's *THE ILLUSTRATED MAN* (1969). Goldsmith went on to score such genre staples as *THE MEPHISTO WALTZ* (1971); *THE OTHER* (1971), based on Tom Tryon's Bradburyesque novel; *THE OMEN* and *LOGAN'S RUN* (both 1976), *THE SWARM* (1978); *ALIEN* and *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE* (both 1979); *PSYCHO II* (1983); *GREMLINS* (1984); *MATINEE* (1993); and *THE VANISHING* and *THE SHADOW* (both 1994).

In 1973, Goldsmith scored Roman Polanski's *CHINATOWN*, one of the greatest films of the decade (if also one of the most depressing)



PREVIOUS PAGE: The classic CHINATOWN poster. **ABOVE LEFT:** An equally classic television logo. **ABOVE CENTER:** One big unhappy family in *THE OTHER* (1972), based on the novel by Tom Tryon. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Lawrence Woolsey (John Goodman) the Castle-esque "master of movie horror" in *MATINEE* (1993). **RIGHT:** Robert Drivas skinnydips, but proves he hasn't a patch on *THE ILLUSTRATED MAN* (1969).

CHINATOWN was partially inspired by a sordid chapter in California history; the Owens Valley/Los Angeles aqueduct project of the early part of the century, when land was secretly bought off and water diverted from a lush farming region east of the city to Los Angeles, providing a much-needed supply for L.A. but ultimately decimating the rural area in the process. (This is dramatized in the film when a farmer and his sheep disrupt the courtroom scene.) CHINATOWN is also a Technicolor homage to both the noir films of the '40s and the fiction that inspired them, interweaving a variety of overlapping pulp fiction elements and emotional hooks in Robert Towne's complex, literate screenplay. A Chandleresque tough, cynical, and disillusioned dick, Jake Gittes (Jack Nicholson), gradually uncovers a network of political and moral corruption while being conned into trailing Hollis Mulwray (Darrell Zwerling), an official in the '30s Los Angeles Water and Power Department who, Gittes falsely perceives, is having an extramarital affair with a younger woman. After Gittes' findings and photographs are leaked to the press, the official commits suicide—or is it murder? In the process of tracking down those who involved him in the scam, and uncovering the truth behind the death, Gittes becomes involved in a bittersweet, doomed affair with Mulwray's widow (a breathlessly chic, tremulously harassed Faye Dunaway in one of her finest performances). The compli-

cated, crisscrossing plot lines finally culminate in a genuinely tragic denouement in L.A.'s Chinatown (a section of the city bearing the onus of Jake's most disillusioning previous experiences), and lead to the film's famous penultimate line: "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown...."

Bathed in ironically gold-washed cinematography, and impeccable in its period detail (from Dunaway's death mask makeup and veiled hats to the contents of grocery bags and bathroom medicine cabinets), CHINATOWN permeates its meticulous period trappings with the dank cynicism and political/moral despair of the decade in which it was made. As Ryan Harvey commented in a perceptive review of the score in a recent *Film Score Monthly*: "CHINATOWN is an anti-nostalgia film, luring audiences with the appeal of an old detective flick, then hitting them with a bitterness few American films have matched."

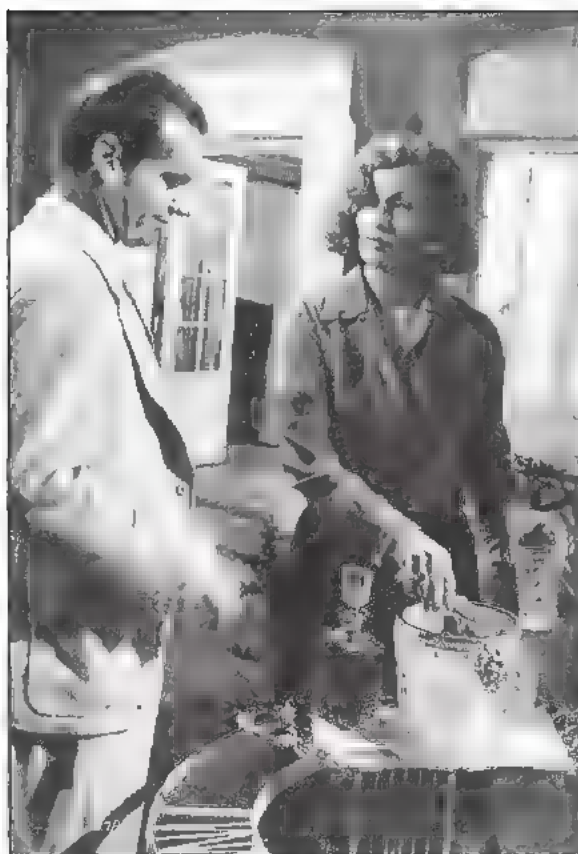
Goldsmith was reportedly called in to work on the film when the score by Philip Lembro, Polanski's original composer of choice, was rejected. In spite of a deadline tight even by Hollywood's standards—Goldsmith reportedly completed the music in only 10 days—the resulting score is one of the composer's early/middle period masterpieces. While Goldsmith has often attributed the score's atmosphere to his boyhood ("I grew up in Los Angeles and that's amazingly enough the way it looked. I can remember the whole ambiance."), the music is also among the composer's most fatalistically



romantic (at least in the film's later emotional moments), the score's haunting and bittersweet love theme only somewhat mediating the script's bleakly bitter nihilism.

Goldsmith is best known for his complex textures and eclectic layerings of various influences ranging from Bartok to Ligeti, and for gritty scores such as the original *ALIEN* and *OUTLAND* (1981), so it's sometimes overlooked that he is something of a master melodist as well. One of his earliest efforts, *A PATCH OF BLUE* (1965), produced a simple and haunting main theme that inspired a number of jazz versions at the time of the film's release. One of his lesser-known and more underrated scores for the ill-advised remake of John Ford's classic *STAGECOACH* (1966), produced a similarly moving and naively folklike main theme which, as "I Will Follow," with lyrics by Ruth Satchelor, is heard in a Mancini-like choral arrangement on the recently reissued soundtrack album. For Blake Edwards' revisionary, beautifully shot (and also underrated) Western, *WILD ROVERS* (1971), Goldsmith produced a score that out-Coplanded Copland, along with a simple, gutsy folk ballad sung (only on the soundtrack album, I believe) by Ellen Smith, Goldsmith's daughter. For one of George Cukor's last films, the notorious *JUSTINE* (1969), Goldsmith penned another singularly beautiful and exotic main theme, and, in a similarly Euro mode, created a haunting French accordion tune for *PAPILLON* (1973). Continuing his Euro-fantastic mode, the credits to the first *WARLOCK* film (1991) unrolled against a somberly haunting medieval tune, and Goldsmith's score, heard only in the European cut of Ridley Scott's *LEGEND* (1985), featured an exquisite, if too briefly heard ballad in the form of a simple English folk song.

But the most haunting of Goldsmith's melodic inspirations was reserved for *CHINATOWN*. Performed by a glisteningly mellow solo trumpet, evocative of the period sound of Bunny and Bix, and sheathed in a swath of strings which seem like the last, luminous, dying gasp of Alfred Newman's celebrated 20th Century Fox string sonorities, Goldsmith's heartbreaking but distinctly unsentimental theme is first



Jake Gittes and Evelyn Mulwray (Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway) ponder some liquid refreshment in *CHINATOWN* (1973).

heard in the "Main Title," then held in reserve for the final third of the plot, when Jake and Evelyn Mulwray embark on their doomed affair. From then on, the bittersweet theme is inextricably woven into the more modern (and anachronistic) elements in the score, as fatalistically as Jake and Evelyn careen towards their own pathetic denouement: "Jake and Evelyn," "Love Theme from *CHINATOWN* (End Title)."

Goldsmith's *CHINATOWN* theme was even published in sheet-music form at the time of the film's original release. Had that period been more sympathetic toward lyrical, quality pop, the *CHINATOWN* theme might have achieved the popularity and exposure that a similarly unexpected piece achieved in the mid '40s: Bronislau Kaper's main theme from his symphonic score for MGM's *GREEN DOLPHIN STREET* (1947), which went on to become a popular standard and jazz classic. Had Goldsmith emerged at an earlier point in film history, certain of his melodies might well have attained the mass acceptance that the popular works of Kaper and Victor Young achieved in a less cynical, more emotionally vulnerable era. Some rather lame ly-

rics were added to his *JUSTINE* theme, but *CHINATOWN* was published as a piano solo.

Prior to the appearance of the love theme late in the film, the application of music in *CHINATOWN* is almost ascetic, as was the case with many '70s films in which the tendency was to underscore. Cues in these sections are reserved mostly for terse but effective jolts of emphasis and atmosphere, mostly from liquid pianos, woozily vacillating strings, and a variety of percussion, notably in the cryptic appearances of the boy on a horse in the dry Los Angeles river bed where Gittes trails Mulwray ("The Boy on a Horse"). A predominant element in these cues is Goldsmith's use of multiple pianos, often played in the experimental mode of American concert composers such as Henry Cowell and John Cage, who expanded the sonic possibilities of the piano by strumming and plucking on the open strings of a grand, and by "preparing" its hammers with thumb tacks, paper, and various other means. (This technique even filtered into certain pop modes of the '50s, with albums such as *FIRE-*

WORKS, in which, prior to *EXODUS*, their hit single with normal duo-pianos, Ferrante and Teicher applied Cowell-pioneered piano techniques to pop standards.) This unique, almost electronic effect is heard clearly as Gittes fights off Noah Cross's thugs at the Mar Vista retirement home, and at various other points in the score ("Noah Cross," "The Last of Ida").

Like many scores of the period, parts of *CHINATOWN* are also under the influence of a film that appeared in 1968. Stanley Kubrick's still controversial 2001, *A SPACE ODYSSEY*. After jettisoning Alex North's original score (which Goldsmith, an ardent admirer of North's music, recently restored and recorded), Kubrick ultimately went for a classical pastiche score, the most striking element of which (aside from the still hotly debated "Blue Danube" waltz) were excerpts from the works of Gyorgy Ligeti.

Ligeti was a contemporary European composer who refined the modernist technique of tone clustering, the arrangement of any number of individual, harmonically unrelated tones into a chordal and/or contrapuntal mass, into a highly in-

dividual (if not terribly listenable) style. (The tone cluster technique was also pioneered in the piano works of Henry Cowell.) Some of Ligeti's scores, such as "Atmosphères," which underscores the climactic "Stargate" sequence in 2001, break the orchestra into a myriad of individual instrumental parts rather than into individual instrumental sections. (It looks somewhat like the composer had spilled a pepper shaker onto the manuscript.) The result is a floating blur of sound in which any conventional harmonic points of organization and resolution are abandoned. The resulting amorphous sonic haze of quarter and micro tones produced by this technique was perfect for such scenes as the discovery of the monolith on the moon, and the aforementioned "Stargate" climax. Most people had never heard of Ligeti in 1968, but the sound was so perfect for sci-fi and horror scoring that it inevitably influenced many ensuing scores of the period, among them the more modernistic passages in CHINATOWN (specifically the "Last of Ida" and "The Captive" tracks).

This is by no means to suggest that Goldsmith's music is simply derivative, though what Hollywood score is not? Goldsmith is an amazingly

original and individualistic composer, with a remarkable versatility for creating both simple diatonic theme melodies and highly complex, often serialized and atonal textures, and somehow (as in CHINATOWN) fusing them into a unique and cohesive whole. In its use of percussion—chimes, guiros, claves, wood blocks, Bartokian snare drums—and other exotic sonics, CHINATOWN also echoes one of Goldsmith's most renowned scores, PLANET OF THE APES.

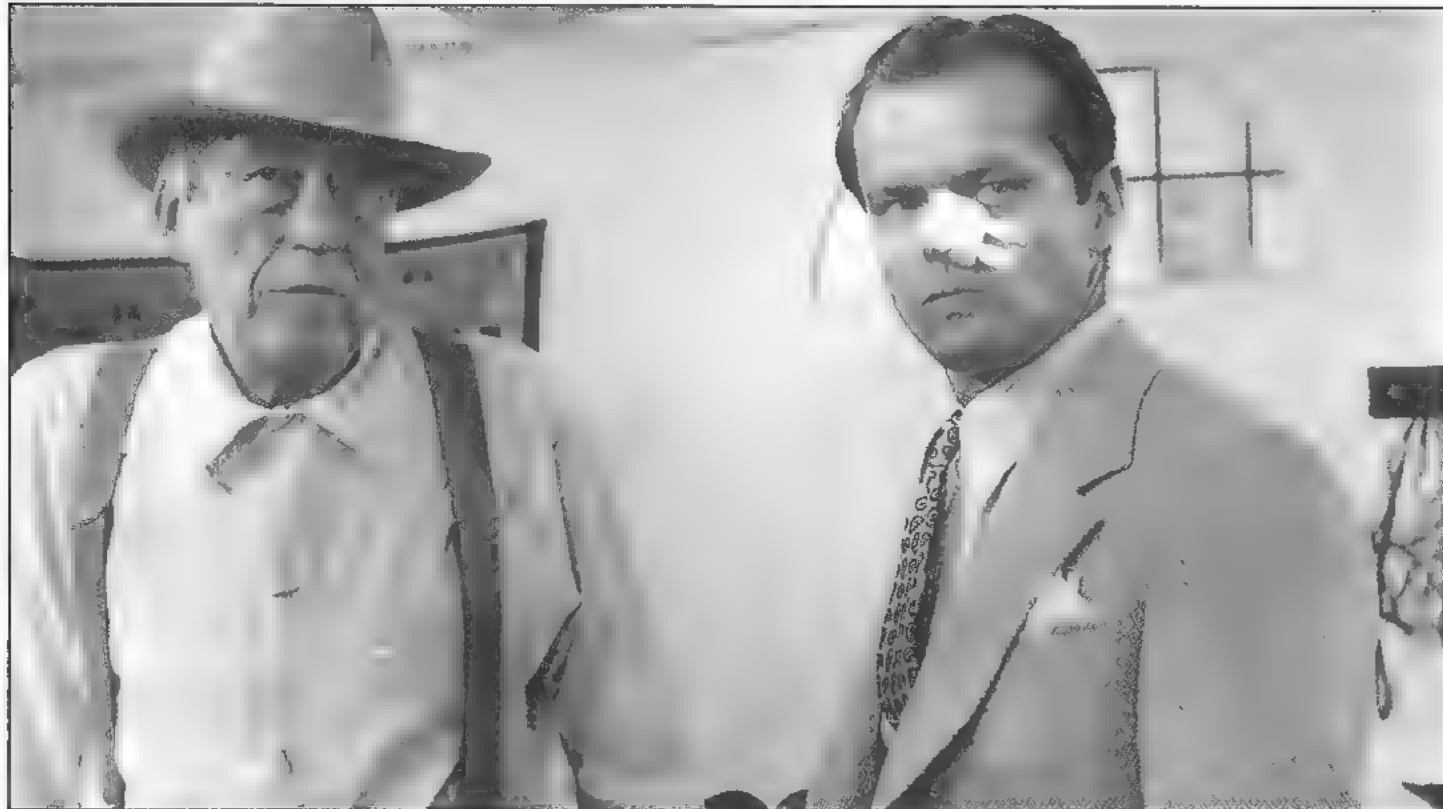
The Varese Sarabande reissue is an exact duplication of the original (and well-edited) ABC LP (ABDP-848): no outtakes, no alternate tracks, no additions. (What a relief!) The tracks, order of cues (not heard as the music appears in the film), and cover art of the original LP are all retained, avoiding the current tendency to improve on a good, and in this case a near perfect, thing. Due to the brevity of many cues, particularly those from the film's first half, several are edited together for more cohesive listening. There is, in fact, not a great deal of original music in either film or album, but to paraphrase what Spencer Tracy said about Katharine Hepburn in one of their films, what's there is choice. Three tracks of period source music (taking up about

eight minutes of playing time) are included here as on the LP: Bunny Berigan doing Vernon Duke's "I Can't Get Started" and two suave piano solos heard in one of the restaurant scenes, Jerome Kern/Dorothy Fields' "The Way You Look Tonight" and Ralph Rainger's "Easy Living." The album as a whole plays beautifully, and these period tracks are anything but intrusive, indeed providing a welcome respite from the score's more abrasive moments, while echoing Goldsmith's use of traditional piano sounds in some of the love music. It's one of the few soundtrack albums I wouldn't even think of recuing on CD.

As a key aural signifier of the kind of intensity we used almost to take for granted in Hollywood films, as an alternatively acrid and bitter-sweet evocation of a golden, vanished City of Angels (at one point in the film Nicholson comments on what a "small town" Los Angeles is), as a complement to one of the best films of the era, and as pure sensual listening, Goldsmith's CHINATOWN is, quite simply, a masterpiece. It may also be the last great love theme of its kind written for all too-human human beings.

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One of the pleasures of CHINATOWN came in finding the director of one of the most famous (and best) of all detective movies appearing in one of the best (and now famous) of all detective movies. That's John Huston, the man behind THE MALTESE FALCON (1941), as Noah Cross.





When Sheldon Leonard died on January 11th, the obituaries concentrated on his formidable career as the producer (and sometimes director) of such memorable television landmarks as *MAKE ROOM FOR DADDY*, *THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW*, *THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW*, *MY WORLD AND WELCOME TO IT*, and *I SPY*. His career as a motion picture actor was reduced for the most part to a single paragraph, with perhaps a second paragraph noting his best-known movie role: Nick, the bartender who "was makin' angels" in the 1946 Frank Capra holiday perennial *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*. But mys-

tery and crime film fans remembered another Sheldon Leonard, an earlier, far more sinister Sheldon Leonard, a man who brought style, class, pin-striped suits, and an inimitable speaking voice to a variety of gangster roles in movies running the gamut from A (*ANOTHER THIN MAN*) to Z (*ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY*)

Born in New York in 1907, Leonard first made a name for himself on Broadway, appearing in such smash hit comedies as *THREE MEN ON A HORSE* (1937), *HAVING WONDERFUL TIME* (1937), and *KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE* (1938). Briefly, he took time out to make his first motion picture: a voodoo melodrama called *DRUMS IN THE NIGHT* (1934), filmed on location in Port Au Prince, Haiti. Prophetically, he played the heavy. Then it was back to getting laughs on the Great White Way until *ANOTHER THIN MAN*, the third in the popular series starring William Powell and Myrna Loy, brought him to Hollywood in 1939.

When Hollywood beckoned, it was—unlike Broadway—no laughing matter. The film factories saw Leonard not as a comic foil, but as a wiseguy, a gangster—and that's what he remained for much of his acting career, although, more often than most movie tough guys, he found himself in comedies such as *TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME* (1941), *HIT THE ICE* (1943), and a string of Damon Runyon adaptations including *GUYS AND DOLLS* (1955) and *POCKETFUL OF MIRACLES* (1961).

Leonard also got to play it for laughs on such radio classics as *DUFFY'S TAVERN*, *THE JUDY CANOVA SHOW*, *AMOS 'N' ANDY*, and (as the race track tout) *THE JACK BENNY SHOW*.

In this, his last interview, Sheldon Leonard returned to those backlot mean streets to recall the glory days of Hollywood . . .

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SHELDON LEONARD

interviewed
by
Danny
Savello

interviewed
by
Roger Hurlburt

MARC LAWRENCE

Marc Lawrence has been responsible in one way or another for more elements of emotion in the entertainment media than the average viewer is possibly aware. Long respected within the industry both for his memorable and incisive "heavies" in the crime/suspense genres and for his directorial work on television and film, Lawrence is today recognized by critics, scholars, and audiences alike for his multifaceted contributions to the art and industry of motion pictures.

He appeared most memorably in *CLOAK AND DAGGER* (1946, in one of the cinema's most violent fights-to-death with Gary Cooper), *KEY LARGO* (1948, as Ziggy), and *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE* (1950, as Cobby). Add the fact that Lawrence has directed over 30 television episodes, and acted in even more, and one begins to get an understanding of just how pervasive an influence Marc Lawrence has been in our lives.

Born in New York, Lawrence entered films via the theater. Success in student productions brought him to the Provincetown Playhouse and, in 1930, to a two-year scholarship with Eva Le Gallienne's eminent repertory theater. The year 1933 saw his film debut in *WHITE WOMAN*. From 1933 through 1951, Lawrence appeared in over 100 films, firmly establishing himself as one of Hollywood's most durable and versatile character actors.

Blacklisted in Hollywood during those turbulent flag-waving days of the '50s, Lawrence continued his acting career in Europe, being featured in some 20 pictures in Italy. In 1958, Lawrence returned to the stage in London with his critically acclaimed portrayal of Eddie Carbone in *A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE*. (Ben Hecht cited it as "one of the three greatest per-

formances I've seen in 30 years.") Back in Sunny Cal in 1960, at the suggestion of Lee Marvin, Lawrence began directing for TV with an episode of *RACKET SQUAD*. This led to some *ROARING TWENTIES* episodes at Warners, which in turn developed into two years and over 25 directorial credits on such series as *MAVERICK* and *77 SUNSET STRIP*.

In 1963, Lawrence produced and directed the

independent feature film, *NIGHTMARE IN THE SUN*. Made on a remarkable 16-day schedule, the picture starred Ursula Andress as a nymphomaniac and John Derek as a hitchhiker who becomes the innocent victim of an oppressively nightmarish manhunt. With memorably eccentric performances by Aldo Ray, Keenan Wynn, Sammy Davis

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LEFT: Nick and Nora Charles (William Powell and Myrna Loy) meet one of film's nattiest gangsters in *ANOTHER THIN MAN* (1939). RIGHT: After the Thin Man, the Falcon (Tom Conway) met Sheldon Leonard in *THE FALCON IN HOLLYWOOD* (1944). NEXT PAGE: Leonard thought working with Abbott and Costello was tough till he met the Bowery Boys in *BOWERY BOMBSHELL* (1946) and *JINX MONEY* (1948, pictured).

SHELDON LEONARD

Continued from page 56

Scarlet Street: You became an actor . . .

Sheldon Leonard: Out of necessity. This was the depression of the '30s—1931, as a matter of fact. I was fresh out of college and I needed a job. The only skill I could offer was a skill that I had developed in college and high school, as an amateur actor. I was lucky enough to be able to sell that.

SS: And how'd you become a gangster?

SL: As to becoming a gangster, well, that happened when I came to Hollywood. I never did gangsters on Broadway. I was 10 years on Broadway in a succession of very good, very successful plays, in which I played smooth, seductive leeches and libertines, and when I went to Hollywood they took one look at me and heard my Brooklyn accent and decided I was a gangster. (Laughs) That's the merchandise I sold them for the next dozen years

SS: What plays did you appear in on Broadway?

SL: THREE MEN AND A HORSE, HAVING WONDERFUL TIME, KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE

SS: You must have quite a fair share of theater stories

SL: Oh, yes! I had quite a few instances with Tallulah Bankhead. The first time I met her, she was on the toilet seat in the Colonial Theatre in Boston. Wide open door. She waved me in, "Come in, dahling, I'll only be a moment."

SS: Before you went to Hollywood, your first movie was a voodoo horror film called *DRUMS IN THE NIGHT*. It was made under a special arrangement with England, wasn't it?

SL: The treaty arrangement was that England would accept five American films for every one that we would accept from them. We wanted to send them hundreds and they had only grosses to send us, so in order to increase the number that they would accept, we began making pictures for them! (Laughs)

SS: What can you tell us about the picture itself?

SL: Well, the script had been written by George Terwilliger, who had, up until that point, been a research man for the Society for Psychic Research, investigating psychic phenomena. There was a reward that had been put up by Harry Houdini, the magician, in his will. He stipulated a reward of \$25,000 to anyone who could demonstrate a real psychic phenomenon. Something that couldn't be debunked. And it was Terwilliger's job to investigate such submissions, and see whether or not they were authentic. In the course of doing that, he became familiar with the voodoo religion. He wrote this script about voodoo, and in it I played a plantation owner on the island of Jamaica who got involved with the voodoo people. It was a dramatic thriller, with me being menaced by voodoo priests and everyone. The remarkable thing about making it was that, when we sailed down to Jamaica, on a great, white boat—in those days, that was the only way to get to the islands, because there was no air transportation—when we went down there, we stopped off at the island of Haiti to pick up the necessary voodoo props that were indicated in the script—things like the stuffed snake skin,

the voodoo drums, and all the other thing pertinent to the voodoo religion. The prop man, whose job it was to secure those things, found out that they couldn't be bought because they were sacred to the practitioners of the religion, like an altar cloth or the crucifix might be in the Catholic religion. So, instead of buying them, he stole them! Got somebody to steal 'em, and we were told by people who knew that it was the surest way to bring down all the curses of voodoo on our company, that we were in for nothing but bad luck. And the first thing that happened to us on the first day of shooting was that the prop man was standing hip-deep in the water and got attacked by a barracuda. It tore his hip out and he bled to death on the beach!

SS: Oh, good lord!

SL: The next day we were attacked by a swarm of hornets when we attempted to light up a big cottonwood tree for some night scenes. Four of the company people went to the hospital for a week—me among them. And so it went. (Laughs) The voodoo curse descended on us in full strength.

SS: While you were filming, you met actor Richard Haydn.

SL: Dick Haydn, yeah. He brought us to a party where we were introduced to the host, who was sitting at the head of the table—dead. It was his farewell party. (Laughs) It's the native equivalent of an Irish wake, full of music and dancing and a big table full of food. We were introduced, very soberly, to the host—and we bowed and accepted the introduction! Didn't bother to shake

hands with him, though. (Laughs) On leaving, we were informed that it was etiquette to say goodbye to him, which we did. After we left, they buried him with a guard of people standing over the grave for a period of three days to make sure that nobody disinterred the body. Bodies—freshly buried bodies—were in great demand to be turned into zombies, to serve the master of the zombies, and they were useful for that purpose until they had undergone some deterioration in the grave. So—that was our first night in Kingston, Jamaica.

SS: Ever meet a zombie while you were down there?

SL: No—and if I had, I would have been running too fast to be able to reminisce! (Laughs) No, in the cool atmosphere in which we live, in the objective environment in which we live, that seems absurd. But when you're down there, believe me, you become very gullible and very receptive to the idea. In the hotel where we stayed, the housemaid bawled the hell out of me because I didn't burn or otherwise dispose of the combings from my hair or the clippings from my toenails. She assured me that, if I left those things around, somebody could get me in their power by including those clippings

in a voodoo doll, which would then become a surrogate for me. It could make me sick or make me do anything they wanted, just by possessing my hair combings.

SS: Very spooky. Your next film was a far more high class affair: *ANOTHER THIN MAN*.

SL: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Myrna Loy and Bill Powell, . . .

SS: And Asta. What can you tell us about working with them?

SL: Well, there was no problem with them! They were all delightful! The only problem I had was with the director, Woody Van Dyke. W. S. Van Dyke Major W. S. Van Dyke, Retired Marine Corps. There were problems I had with him as a result of his excessive friendliness. He adopted me and, in the process, demanded that I keep him company on his nightly routine, which consisted of visiting all the bars and pubs that were open until he couldn't stand any more. (Laughs) I, at the time, was only 32. I couldn't follow his routine, but he seemed to thrive on it. My first day on the set was after he had kept me up until almost daybreak the night before. I came in after a hasty, cold shower and a cup of black coffee and he was sitting in his director's chair sipping his cup of coffee—which was about 10% coffee, 90% gin! He took one look at me and said, "You look terrible, kid! If you're gonna make it in pictures you gotta take care of yourself."

SS: What led you to give up Broadway for Hollywood?

SL: In those days, all the Hollywood studios had talent scouts in New York. They were combing the theater, because the Hollywood picture industry was very eager to obtain Broadway actors. Talking pictures were still young, and the actors from silent pictures didn't know how to speak, as they said. An actor who was eligible for casting, the first question was, "Can he speak?"—which meant, can he speak in a way that records satisfactorily? So they were very eager to pick up Broadway actors who "could speak." They had talent scouts going to all the opening nights and scouting the plays. I had received offers from 20th Century Fox, Universal, and Metro. In fact, I was offered two or three different parts before the one that I accepted at Metro. The difference between them was the amount of the guarantee. What they did in those days was to guarantee you four weeks, five weeks, six weeks—whatever it might be at a stipulated salary. And the Metro deal was the most attractive one.

SS: *FALL, DARK AND HANDSOME* was another gangster portrayal.

SL: Yeah, for 20th Century Fox.

SS: It's a Runyonesque gangster comedy. Your name has often been associated with Damon Runyon. Did you ever meet him?

SL: Yes, I had, back in my Broadway days. He was a big part of the Broadway scene, along with Winchell and Dutch Schultz and all the other people who populated the area



SS: What is it about Runyon's writing that made you so ideally suited to play his characters?

SL: Oh, I don't think I am ideally suited. It's just that most people don't understand that Runyon is not to be taken literally. Runyon's stories are to be treated like fairy tales, like fables; they're not to be played realistically. When they're done realistically, they die. When they're done with an air of fantasy about them, as happened with *GUYS AND DOLLS*, then they work all right. I had the good fortune to be able to interpret Runyon characters with a light touch. They weren't taken too seriously. Once you take them seriously, an element of menace comes into the characterization and that's anti-comedic.

SS: One of your earliest Broadway appearances was in a comedic role in *HOTEL ALIMONY*, although you hadn't any experience in comedy.

SL: I learned! In those days, you did eight performances a week. You'd pile up hundreds and hundreds of performances in front of an audience. There is no greater academy for learning how to handle comedy than an audience. Ask Jack Benny or George Burns or any of those people, who learned all about comedy from hundreds of thousands of performances in front of audiences. Nothing like an audience to teach you how to milk a laugh, how to create a laugh, and how to sustain it.

SS: Of your Runyon movies, such as *GUYS AND DOLLS*, *POCKETFUL OF MIRACLES*, and *STOP, YOU'RE KILLING ME*, have you a favorite?

SL: Because of the company I kept, I guess it would be *GUYS AND DOLLS*. Frank Sinatra made that a delightful experience. At the time, he had an elaborate dressing room on the Samuel Goldwyn lot, and he used to have his pilot, the pilot of his private plane, fly up to Las Vegas each morning and package an elaborate Italian lunch, which he would then fly back to Hollywood. Brando and Stubby Kaye and Johnny Silver and B. S. Pully and I would have lunch in Sinatra's dressing room.

SS: In Hollywood's heyday, were you friends with any of your fellow movie gangsters, such as Joe Sawyer, Elisha Cook, Marc Lawrence...

SL: The term "friends" is misleading. I knew most of them. I was friends with few of them. Marc Lawrence and I were rivals for the same kind of parts and that interfered with any sort of developing friendship. Harold Huber was a good

friend of mine. In fact, Harold was the only one with whom I became really friendly.

SS: You appeared with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello in *HIT THE ICE* and *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN*.

SL: Well, there were three things that militated against my enjoyment of anything that I did with Abbott and Costello. The first thing that militated against it was their personal attitude. They weren't terribly anxious to go to work, you



In 1950, Sheldon Leonard traded in pinstripes for buckskins to travel *THE IROQUOIS TRAIL*.

know? I think they would rather have played gin rummy in the dressing room than come back on the set and do their work. Consequently, scenes tended to be badly under-rehearsed. They were also addicted to practical jokes, and I'm not very good at being the subject of practical jokes. Their director, Charlie Lamont, apparently had the sincere desire to get me killed. He put me in all sorts of absurd situations, where I

was in physical danger. So those things diluted my enjoyment of the opportunity to work with them.

SS: Still, there are some outtakes from *HIT THE ICE* in which you seem to be having a good time. It can't have been all bad.

SL: Nothing is ever all bad. Everything is relative. There were different degrees of pleasure with which I remember the things I've done, but there are very few—as a matter of fact, without some serious meditation, I can't think of anything that I didn't really enjoy to some degree. Nothing I hated. It was a very serendipitous thing, my coming into the theater and to the entertainment business. I didn't intend to be an actor. I didn't intend to be any of the things I became—director, producer, or what have you. But the term serendipity was invented to describe the good fortune that I had by falling into the acting trade and then into the various other activities I have followed.

SS: After *HIT THE ICE*, why did you appear in *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN*?

SL: Well, the first thing that brings any working actor back is the paycheck. (Laughs) Let me put it this way: if there'd been a conflict, if I'd been offered an Abbott and Costello picture and offered another picture at Metro with Myrna Loy and Bill Powell, I would undoubtedly have chosen the Metro picture. But when there was no choice, you just went to work and picked up your check.

SS: You worked with *The Bowery Boys* in *BOWERY BOMBSHELL* and *JINX MONEY*.

SL: Well, now, that comes about as close as anything I can remember to my disliking the experience. (Laughs) They were an arrogant and obnoxious little pack of kids, particularly Leo Gorcey. You're familiar with the term "snotty"? That's what they were—New York teenagers. They had been spoiled and the recipients of adulation and more money than they knew what to do with, and they were the result of that combination of circumstances.

SS: You appeared in a comedy called *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY*. Is it a title you'd rather forget?

SL: No, I don't feel strongly one way or the other. It's like the women who work the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Laurel Canyon. They're doing it, they don't necessarily like their job, but it's a job and they do it. Pictures

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ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE KILLERS

▲ **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE KILLER**, **BORIS KARLOFF** was the lengthy title of a 1949 comic mystery with Bud, Lou, and Dear Boris, but it was scarcely the first time baseball's favorite comedy team matched wits with a major movieland baddie. (Besides, Karloff turned out *not* to be the killer!) In addition to *Scarlet Street* interviewees Sheldon Leonard and Marc Lawrence, Abbott and Costello were often supported by the screen's top criminals.

William Frawley played a string of comic tough guys (alternating with a string of comic detectives) in the years before becoming the immortal Fred Mertz on *I LOVE LUCY*. In Abbott and Costello's first feature, **ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS** (1940), Frawley was nightclub owner Roscoe. But he didn't send his muscle after Bud and Lou; no, in this musical comedy based on a story by Charlie Chan creator Earl Derr Biggers, Bud and Lou were the muscle!

In **HOLD THAT GHOST** (1941), Abbott and Costello hit the crooked jackpot! As Chuck and Ferdy, they're on the scene when racketeer Moose Matson (William Davidson) gets his, and as a result get theirs: the team inherits an inn overrun with "ghostly" gangsters (including Marc Lawrence, Milton Parsons, and Paul Fix) and the Andrews Sisters. The following year saw them touring the South Seas, outwitting master villain Lionel Atwill in **PARDON MY SARONG** and solving the murder of Colonel Andrews (Thomas Gomez) in **WHO DONE IT**. Gomez, usually cast as the victimizer, not the victim—he even played Professor Mo-

riarty opposite Basil Rathbone's Sherlock Holmes in an unsuccessful stage show—returned to blackmail the comic duo when they found themselves in **SOCIETY** (1944). Before that, however, Marc Lawrence had his second shot at Bud and Lou, teamed with Sheldon Leonard and Joe Sawyer for **HIT THE ICE** (1943).

A lycanthropy-free Lon Chaney Jr. was the larcenous college caretaker in **HERE COME THE CO-EDS** (1945), fixing a basketball game that found Lou playing in drag as Daisy Dimple. Mike Mazurki (murderously memorable as Moose Malloy in 1944's **MURDER, MY SWEET**) enlivened **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO IN HOLLYWOOD** (1945) and returned to heat things up in **THE NOOSE HANGS HIGH** (1948), aided and abetted by the always unscrupulous Joseph Calleia.

Marc Lawrence was back for one last bout in **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO IN THE FOREIGN LEGION** (1950), a lesser A&C effort that nonetheless sported such eminent creeps as Walter Slezak, Douglas Dumbrille, Dan Seymour, and Tor Johnson. Then it was Sheldon Leonard's turn to be seen once again, this time in **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET THE INVISIBLE MAN** (1951).

It was curtains for the team of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello after the lackluster **DANCE WITH ME, HENRY** (1956), but, true to form, their final feature found them fighting the mob, here represented by Ted de Corsia as Big Frank—and, needless to say, coming out on first

—Richard Valley

Marc Lawrence, Sheldon Leonard, and Joe Sawyer were but three of the many movie gangsters encountered by Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (pictured here with Ginny Simms in 1943's **HIT THE ICE**).





LEFT: Sheldon Leonard was the heavy once again in *TALL, DARK and HANDSOME*, a Runyonesque comedy starring Cesar Romero. Nine years later, Romero took the Leonard role in the remake, *LOVE THAT BRUTE*. RIGHT: Bud Abbott and Lou Costello met master screen hoods Sheldon Leonard, Joe Sawyer, and Marc Lawrence in *HIT THE ICE* (1943)

SHELDON LEONARD

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like *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY*—it's a kind of artistic prostitution, if you will, but there are stages at which all of us, particularly those of us in entertainment, accept the fact that a degree of prostitution is inherent in our trade. Nothing we can do about it.

SS: *One of your costars in ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY was Bela Lugosi.*

SL: Well, I don't remember anything in particular that stands out with him, but I do remember his counterpart, Boris Karloff. He became my very good friend when I was making the *SPY* show for NBC. I used Boris Karloff in several episodes made in Spain. He was a delightful man. He told me about Lugosi, and that they were friends. They were rivals and competitors, but they were still good friends. Karloff made me very fond of that category of actor.

SS: *ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY also starred Wally Brown and Alan Carney.*

SL: I remember them as competent and attractive. They were very effective in what they did, but they were not—I don't know how to put it—they were not glamorous. They were merely effective. They were funny, they were amusing, but I don't remember them as being any outstanding combination.

SS: *You played another baddie in THE FALCON IN HOLLYWOOD. Did you have a problem with your typecasting as a villain?*

SL: Oh, I had no problem with it. The only problem I had was getting enough of it. That movie was made by a director by the name of Andre

DeToth. A Hungarian, and for the first time I saw a director moving his camera with great fluid motions. He set up scenes so that the camera was in almost constant motion, and I remember admiring his technique. Later, when I went into directing, I took great pains to copy his technique and to develop the same kind of fluidity in the use of the camera.

SS: *Speaking of directors, you worked with the great Howard Hawks on TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT.*

SL: Well, Hawks was the epitome of the Hollywood emperor—you know, the director who tolerated no interference. He threw his producer off the set! Whenever the producer came on the set, he'd say, "Everybody stop work." And he wouldn't resume work until the producer left. (Laughs) I spent—how long was it?—I spent five or six shooting days trying to get about 30 seconds of film, which eluded him. It was a company with a lot of dress extras—150 extras, a very elaborate scene—and I was supposed to shoot a machine gun at Bogart as he came out of a nightclub. The prop man had provided an ice cart with the big, 500 pound blocks of ice in it, and Hawks wanted me to start firing the machine gun as the ice wagon came into the scene; he wanted to see chips flying from the cakes of ice. That meant they had to wire those cakes of ice with explosive charges, to synchronize it with the machine gun—and the machine gun, operating with blanks instead of live cartridges, was very undependable. It's the recoil from live cartridges that makes the gun operate properly, and since we

were using blank cartridges, there was no recoil. Consequently, the gun was very erratic in its operation, and trying to synchronize an erratic gun with explosive charges was very uncertain. We could only do two takes a day, because it took half a day to wire and freeze the explosive charges in the ice. So it took five days to get the thing properly done, and the producer was going absolutely crazy, stark, staring mad, because the set was costing a fortune with all the extras on it. But Hawks was imperturbable. (Laughs)

SS: *TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT is famous for introducing Humphrey Bogart to Lauren Bacall.*

SL: Well, Betty Bacall was naive, impressed with Hollywood—and, of course, greatly impressed with Bogart. She was fresh, startlingly beautiful, much more so in person than she was on the screen at that stage of her life. I think she was only 18 or 19 years old, and there was such a freshness about her, such a startlingly different quality. Bogart, under her influence, turned into a teenager. He was in his regular persona as a sophisticated, somewhat blasé, relaxed adult—but when he met her, he played practical jokes, all sorts of pranks which were very un-Bogart-like in those days. He used a set of handcuffs to handcuff her to his dressing room door one time. (Laughs) In the course of making the picture, it was apparent that there was something operating between them, at least on Bogart's part; he was very much under her influence. I don't know to what extent she was responding to him, al-



LEFT: Sheldon Leonard played Nick the bartender in one of the most beloved fantasy films of all time, Frank Capra's *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* (1946), starring James Stewart. It took almost 30 years for the movie to find its audience. **RIGHT:** It was back to Runyon Land for *GUYS AND DOLLS* (1955), with (among others) B.S. Pully, Stubby Kaye, and Marlon Brando "singing" "Luck Be a Lady."

though, with the glamour of his position as a superstar, it was inevitable that she should be very heavily impressed with him.

SS: You took a couple of breaks from gangsters during your acting career. What do you recall about making *CAPTAIN KIDD* with Charles Laughton and John Carradine?

SL: The thing I remember best is the elaborate makeup. We'd have scars put on our faces, and broken noses created by the makeup man. We had to get in early for makeup call, something like 6AM. Carradine, Laughton, and I were the first in the room because we had the most difficult makeups to do. I remember sitting in the chair between the two of them, Carradine on one side, Laughton on the other, and as the hours spent in the makeup chair passed slowly, they were duelling with one another—Carradine with limericks very salty in their flavor and Laughton with quotations from Shakespeare. On one side Carradine was saying, "There was a young bishop from Kent . . ." On the other side, Laughton was saying, "To be or not to be. Ah, that is the question." It was a fascinating time. (Laughs)

SS: You were at sea again in *SINBAD THE SAILOR*.

SL: Well, again, there was elaborate makeup in that. I tend to black out those pictures. (Laughs)

SS: Aside from your Damon Runyon pictures, we'd hazard a guess that the movie most people remember you for is *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE*.

SL: Well, of course, that's the most durable a thing I ever did. The outstanding thing about that in my

memory is not Jimmy Stewart, although it was his picture after he came out of the army, and he was still unsure of himself and regaining his confidence as an actor. No, the thing I remember best is Frank Capra, who left his imprint on that as he did on every picture he made. Capra's manner of working and his approach to storytelling was one that I adopted wholeheartedly when I did the Danny Thomas series, for example. I used his technique in story construction. The success I had with that show was at least partly due to my admiration for Capra.

SS: You worked with Capra again on *POCKETFUL OF MIRACLES*, his last picture, which was not a good experience for him. Was he bitter about Hollywood?

SL: He paid no attention. Hollywood was not his concern. He created his own little world and in that world he was the final word, the final authority. I don't remember his having to defer to anybody, so I don't remember any conflict with what is called "Hollywood."

SS: *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* was not a major hit when it was released.

SL: Moderate. Only moderate.

SS: But now it's widely hailed as everyone's favorite Christmas movie.

SL: It's crowded. *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* off the screen. (Laughs)

SS: Any idea why?

SL: Oh, the answer to that is very, very complicated. Yes, I have some ideas, because you're getting into an area in which I tend to pontificate. Capra was a storyteller, and the ingredients he put into the story have been described as corn or various propositive adjectives. But the

fact remains that "corn" is the most desirable and the most effective ingredient in entertainment. You have them come out waving the flag and the audience will jump to its feet and cheer. Do any of the corny things that people patronize and look down on, and you move audiences very effectively. What I remember about Capra is his skillful and unerring use of sentiment. I use that term, because corn makes it sound too negative. His use of sentiment was masterful. Think of *MEET JOHN DOE*. Think of all of the pictures he did in which he played on your sentiments like a musician playing on an instrument.

SS: You made mention of *THE DANNY THOMAS SHOW*. You're one of TV's most successful producers. What led you in to that line of work?

SL: They asked me. (Laughs) I was directing *THE DANNY THOMAS SHOW* and the producer after the third year. The William Morris office asked me if I'd take over as producer. Well, as a matter of fact, I had been, in effect, producing it for all of the first three years. Between Danny and me, we were doing all of it ourselves. So when they asked me to produce it, it was a very small step.

SS: *I SPY* took you all over the world.

SL: Oh, yes, indeed. There was Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Mexico, Greece, Morocco, France, Italy, and Portugal . . .

SS: Of the shows you've produced, have you a favorite?

SL: *I SPY*, because of the adventure. It was not merely a production, it

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LEFT and RIGHT. Wearing an inevitable pin-striped suit, Marc Lawrence was one of the prime suspects in **CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU** (1938). Among the actors under the watchful eyes of Charlie (Sidney Toler), Jimmy Chan (Sen Yung), and Detective Arnold (Richard Lane) are Phyllis Brooks, George Zucco, John King, and Robert Barrat. **NEXT PAGE:** The man in the bandages (and pin-striped suit) is Marc Lawrence, out to bedevil **CHARLIE CHAN IN THE WAX MUSEUM** (1940).

MARC LAWRENCE

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Jr., Richard Jaeckel, Robert Duvall, Arthur O'Connell, and George Tobias, Lawrence fashioned a veritable showcase of character actors in what *Film and Filming* called a "powerful and undiluted study of man's inhumanity to man."

Now living in Los Angeles, Marc Lawrence continues to divide his time between acting, writing, and directing. With the revival of interest in the films of the '30s and '40s, Lawrence today finds that more and more people are putting together the face and the name. Small wonder, because Lawrence, from the moment he set foot in Hollywood, had the presence that made for memorable performances . . .

Scarlet Street: What did you do when you first got to Hollywood?

Marc Lawrence: I remember a theater on Hollywood Boulevard where I gave a recital. I did parts of plays and impersonated actors. An agent saw me and told me, "You're either crazy or you're a genius." We went over to Universal and met William Wyler. He was looking to cast a film called **LAUGHING BOY**. They gave me the script, I read it, and Wyler asked me to do a scene. Well, I cried real tears. Wyler was very moved. He said, "I like this skinny kid." I got a call a couple of weeks later to come to the studio and have lunch with Wyler, who told me they were not doing the picture. But he was impressed with me and would keep in touch. Nothing ever happened. From

there, I got my first job in **IF I HAD A MILLION**.

SS: That was an all-star movie with W.C. Fields, Gary Cooper, George Raft, Gene Raymond.

ML: It was an episodic picture. I was in the part with Gene Raymond. I was so full of piss and vinegar; I thought that Raymond was terrible! So I went to see the director, James Cruze. The assistant asked me why I wanted to see Mr. Cruze and I said I wanted him to reshoot the scene. (Laughs) He looked at me and said, "Look, kid, let me tell you something. I think you'll have a career here, but they don't do this sort of thing. And he explained the ABCs of moviemaking to me."

SS: Next came **WHITE WOMAN**, with Carole Lombard and Charles Laughton.

ML: I don't remember too much about it, outside of Carole Lombard cursing. She had a habit of using four letter words: "What the fuck are you guys doing?" She got away with it because she was so beautiful. She was so lovely, it didn't sound foul when it came out of her mouth, just perfectly natural. Laughton, however, was nothing to me.

SS: You had one of your first gangster roles in **DR. SOCRATES**, which starred Paul Muni and Ann Dvorak.

ML: My uncle, Jechal Goldsmith, had been a star of the Yiddish theater. He was a buddy of Paul Muni. Muni was a strange man. First of all, this was not his language. Muni's language was Yiddish; he was brought up in Yiddish theater. One of the most thrilling things I ever saw in the theater was Paul Muni in

FOUR WALLS and in **THIS MAN'S SOUL**. He had a phenomenal energy, which was instinctive with him. It was against the Stanislavski method of acting—you know, examine the mother and the father and the uncle of the character and what time of day he was born and that kind of nonsense. Actors who were instinctive, like Marilyn Monroe, became corrupted by these Stanislavski intellectuals. Some actors you don't need to direct. What they need to become, they become.

SS: **DR. SOCRATES** was directed by William Dieterle.

ML: Dieterle wore gloves. He didn't like to touch anybody. But he was a good director and an interesting man. And I liked Ann Dvorak and I kind of think she liked me, too. A lot of leading ladies liked me, but I was always so fearful of them.

SS: You had quite a few different agents when you began making films.

ML: Oh, I had a lot of agents, like so many wives. You're married to an agent, and then you divorce him right away. (Laughs)

SS: You were in **DESIRE**, with Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich.

ML: They had done some second-unit filming in Paris, and because I looked like the chauffeur in that footage, I became the chauffeur in the studio work. That's the only reason I was in the picture. It was a comedown.

SS: What about **TRAPPED BY TELEVISION**, which you made for Columbia in 1936?

ML: I already had done a picture called **THE FINAL HOUR** at Colum-

bia and that got me a contract. That had Ralph Bellamy and a feisty, high-spirited gal named Marguerite Churchill. It was directed by Ross Lederman. Ross was a roustabout guy—very fast, always wanted the setups and shots to be done very fast.

SS: Then it was back to working with Gene Raymond in *LOVE ON A BET*.

ML: It wasn't that I did not like Raymond. He was a star and I could out-act him.

SS: What's your memory of making *NIGHT WAITRESS*.

ML: My memory was that Tony Quinn had the clap and I told him what to do. (Laughs)

SS: So much for Anthony Quinn! Should we ask you about Chester Morris in *I PROMISE TO PAY*?

ML: I made a couple of pictures with Chester Morris; he was a lovely man. Henry Brandon was in it. Henry never really had a big career, but he had an impressive face. He should have gone into the weird, supernatural, and horror pictures. He made a hit on the stage in L.A. with *THE DRUNKARD* and that made him famous for a while.

SS: *SAN QUENTIN* had Humphrey Bogart, Pat O'Brien, Ann Sheridan

ML: She was a feisty gal. The director, Lloyd Bacon, loved jackets. Ev-

ery day he'd come down to the studio with a different jacket. He was a very sporty guy.

SS: What about Bogie?

ML: Well, when I first met Bogart, we were in a taxi or a getaway car or something. So he says to me, "Listen, when I talk fast, I lisp." I thought he was kidding me; I didn't know then that he had something of a lisp.

SS: You had a frightening experience making *THE SHADOW*, didn't you? C.C. Coleman was the director . . .

ML: Buddy Coleman was assistant director on all of Frank Capra's pictures. I remember one night, a guy had to throw a knife at me. He was a professional knife-thrower. I told Coleman I wouldn't do it. I asked the guy's wife and she said he had missed a couple of times! So Buddy says, "Marc, I personally guarantee that you won't be hurt." Ha! A personal guarantee from a director!

SS: Speaking of directors, you didn't care very much for working with John Brahm, did you?

ML: I didn't like Brahm. He was a Nazi. He hated me; I hated him. Brahm remembered a motion picture called *THE CRIMINAL CODE* and he tried to make me play my role in *CHANGE . . . PENITENTIARY* like Boris Karloff had.

SS: What about H. Bruce Humberstone, with whom you made a number of movies, including *CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU*?

ML: It was very sad. He was discarded later on and he couldn't get a job as a director, even though he had worked so much. Maybe that's because he was a gentle guy and not a loudmouth or bravado type. People think if you don't have a big personality like John Huston, you can't be a good director. But Bruce made some tall films. I did *TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME* with him.

SS: One of your most famous directors was Josef von Sternberg. You appeared in *SERGEANT MADDEN* with Wallace Beery.

ML: Von Sternberg was a peacock and the devil; I liked him. He was a fascinating man because he loved me. I would have thought him an absolute son of a bitch if he hadn't! Von Sternberg brought me to his house in Roseda. He had me sit in a chair, saying "Only great people sit in this chair." I didn't know what in the hell he wanted from me; I felt very peculiar in his presence. He told me about Wallace Beery. "Do not try to take the scene," he advised. It was a stupid thing to say—trying to upstage Wallace Beery! (Laughs)





ABOVE: A lobby card from the film that made Alan Ladd a star instead of Marc Lawrence: *THIS GUN FOR HIRE* (1942), also starring Veronica Lake and Laird Cregar. BELOW: Three of Hollywood's top baddies (Thomas Gomez, Lawrence, and Edward G. Robinson) in *KEY LARGO* (1948).



SS: *CHARLIE CHAN ON BROADWAY* was your first Chan mystery.

ML: I remember Warner Oland very well. He'd say one line and fall asleep. He was a lovely man with a great face, but he would drift off all the time. He was Swedish and he played a Chinaman. They would never allow that today. You're Mexican, you play a Mexican. Black, you play a black.

SS: Let's talk about a few of the other actors with whom you worked. What about Dwight Frye, who is remembered for his horror roles?

ML: Dwight Frye was as small as a dwarf and a magical actor. He had all the instincts for playing weird characters; he had great talent for that, with his voice, his presence, and looks. I was impressed with him and really liked him. He was much like Peter Lorre, with the same kind of evil intensity. If you have a look, you have to play that kind of part. When I came to Hollywood, I had pimples. I had holes in my face and black eyes and I scared the shit out of myself sometimes! Hell, I thought at first I would be a Ronald Colman, like an idiot. If only I had believed my own image back then—what others saw in me—I would have been another Jack Palance.

SS: What about Lionel Atwill?

ML: Lionel was impressive. He had all the attributes of a Shakespearean background. It gave him a sense of language, whereas most American actors had none. He used words not just as words, but as ideas.

SS: Mike Mazurki?

ML: Big Mike Mazurki was a wonderful guy, he could have done anything that Karloff did. He could have made another Frankenstein Monster, because Mike had a marvelous mask. As big as Mike was, that is how gentle he was.

SS: You were close friends with Eduardo Ciannelli.

ML: Eduardo was a buddy. In the 1940s, I did *DILLINGER* with him. There was Edmund Lowe, Elisha Cook, Ciannelli, and Lawrence Tierney... Lowe was the leader, and I was second in command. There was a scene with Eddie explaining the layout. Eduardo pipes in, and I say, "Shut up! Shut up and sit down!" Eduardo goes over to the director, Max Nosseck, and says, "Nobody tells me to shut up! If you hired a coward for this part, you hired the wrong man!" So, little Max comes over to me and says, "Marc, don't say two shut ups, just say yun."

SS: You also worked with Ward Bond

ML: Ward started in the business as a bit player and became a character actor. Later, I did a WAGON TRAIN episode and was so good that Ward had them redo it. There was a kind of stupid ego that Ward had, but I went way back with him.

SS: He was a favorite of John Wayne's.

ML: At one time, Wayne wanted me to teach him how to act. If you look at some of Wayne's pictures—not STAGECOACH, but the Mascot pictures—you'll see he didn't know what the fuck he was doing. I was offered the job with Wayne in 1940. Now John was a very straight guy and always thought acting was a very special thing that had to be understood in a special kind of way. Paul Fix, a very seasoned actor, came in and took the job. Fix would say, "If you don't understand the scene completely, you can't play it; you can't play confusion."

SS: WHO KILLED GAIL PRESTON? starred Don Terry and Rita Hayworth.

ML: Yes, Don Terry! He used four-letter words during his screen test and that impressed Harry Cohn at Columbia. "That guy Terry has balls; I'll make him another fucking Cagney," I heard Cohn say.

SS: I AM THE LAW was a memorable film for you.

ML: Ed Sullivan did a whole column about me because of that picture. There's another story, about the gangster Johnny Roselli, much later the man once hired by the CIA to knock off Castro. He was a friend of Harry Cohn's. Harry courted a lot of tough guys. They were watching me on the screen in a projection room, and he bends over to Harry and whispers, "You know, Harry, that skinny kid up there on the screen could be taken for one of the mob." That was when Joan Cohn, Harry's wife, told me that Harry was crazy about me. After that, I became a favorite at Columbia.

SS: You sounded like a gangster, too.

ML: When I met Lucky Luciano, I thought he was imitating me!

SS: By the time you made CHARLIE CHAN IN HONOLULU, Sidney Toler had replaced Warner Oland as Chan. George Zucco was in that, too.

ML: I had done a play with Toler and knew him; he was an enjoyable person. And I knew Zucco quite well. As fierce as he could be on the screen, he was as gentle off. He was a marvelous actor with a great sense of pace and delivery. First of all, one must know that, when the English are taught to act, they are mostly taught to speak. They do not

slur their words, everything is articulated from the diaphragm and goes right to the top of the mouth. Everyone sounds like Herbert Marshall! (Laughs)

SS: Three actors who didn't sound like Herbert Marshall were George Raft, Bogart, and William Holden. You were with them in INVISIBLE STRIPES.

ML: When Holden was testing for the picture GOLDEN BOY, I was under contract at Columbia. The film's director, Rouben Mamoulian, asked me to test with two young actors,

with him and shared ideas. Eventually, he shared the secret of his directing with me. "The best picture I ever made was LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER," Hathaway said. "I had a case of the shingles, my good-luck disease. That's why I get mad on the set; every time I get mad, I recreate the good fortune I had with LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER."

SS: What about Tyrone Power?

ML: Tyrone Power was a star. He acted like a star. He was good-looking and Zanuck loved him. Ty also adored himself and took himself very seriously. He had a voice and face that registered marvelously on film, like Robert Taylor. But unlike Power, Taylor was a real mensch.

SS: John Carradine was with you in BRIGHAM YOUNG.

ML: I loved John. In the early '30s, when I was selling newspapers in Hollywood to make a buck, I ran into this skinny, hungry character on the street. It was John Carradine. He was on his ass a little bit, so he stayed at my place over night. All night long he kept reciting Shakespeare. I was trying to get a little sleep, but it was very nice being treated to Shakespeare. The next morning, I had to be out early, so I told John to help himself to some eggs in the fridge. When I got home, that skinny bastard had swallowed down all the eggs and left! (Laughs)

SS: You mentioned TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME earlier.

ML: I hated making that film after doing THE SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS. I mean, what the hell was I doing playing a gangster again? Butch Romero was a lovely guy. He had been a dancer before pictures and all the women loved him. He kept his sexual preference low key.

SS: You were a gangster again in one of Paramount's rare horror films, THE MONSTER AND THE GIRL.

ML: My friend Jack Morse produced that picture. What a character! He was Orson Welles' manager for two years and did Welles a favor by playing the villain with the strange eyes in JOURNEY INTO FEAR, although Jack was not an actor. He was the most fascinating guy I ever knew in Hollywood. He had street wisdom. He was the manager of Gary Cooper, George Raft, Charles Laughton, and director Henry Hathaway; everyone wanted Jack to represent them. He also produced THE SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS and SUNDOWN. He was a fat man married to a very beautiful woman; he could only make love in the dark.



Robert Sterling and William Holden. That's how he got the part.

SS: You appeared with Tyrone Power in JOHNNY APOLLO and BRIGHAM YOUNG. They were both directed by Henry Hathaway.

ML: I got a call at 6 o'clock at night that I had to memorize 10 pages of dialogue for BRIGHAM YOUNG—which I did, like an idiot. The next morning, at the shoot, I hardly had enough energy to deliver it properly. Hathaway was a four letter word man, the most monstrous guy on the set and the nicest fellow off, with kind of a childish smile. We got along fine; he was very much like me. One day Hathaway asked me to read a script, because he had the feeling that I wanted to be a director. I read through some scripts



Clockwise from bottom left: Marc Lawrence, Sterling Hayden, Jean Hagen, Louis Calhern, Sam Jaffe, Anthony Caruso, and Marilyn Monroe in John Huston's *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE* (1950).

stopped me and said, "How do I get in touch with Jack? I must see Jack. You're his buddy, how do I find him?" That was Jack Morse. He died from a bad heart.

SS: You made *HOLD THAT GHOST* and *HIT THE ICE* with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello.

ML: I had fun. When you're working with comics like Bob Hope or Abbott and Costello, it is their domain. You're just a stooge; you learn your lines and that's it. You watch them work out their routine and then you come in. But it is not what I call a joyful experience, particularly when you get a temperamental guy like Lou. He always belittled Bud; it was very sad to see Bud reduced so. Later, I often went to Bud's house with my wife. Bud used to fly lobsters in from Maine. Bud Abbott became a very lonely man.

SS: It was in *HIT THE ICE* that you met a certain fellow movie gangster.

ML: I didn't like that film, it was where I met my "rival," Sheldon Leonard, who likes acting the tough guy and imagines he's the tough guy. I directed at Warners for a number of years and Carl Reiner saw me. He called my agent about me coming over to do *THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW* on television. Carl said it was up to Sheldon whether to hire me. Years later, in Spain, I ran into Sheldon, who was doing an *I SPY* episode. We had lunch. He said to me, "You know, you fuck, you did me out of a stage part in 1939. It was *GOLDEN BOY* and I never forgave you." That's why, as producer, he didn't use me on *DICK VAN DYKE*. Imagine that kind of hate!

SS: *LADY SCARFACE* starred Judith Anderson.

ML: I played the tough and Judith Anderson was fucking awful in it.

SS: *NAZI AGENT* costarred Conrad Veidt and Martin Kosleck.

ML: That was directed by Jules Dassin, exponent of the Stanislavski horseshit Veidt—what a warm and gentle guy. As for Martin Kosleck, he was a very serious actor and very serious on the set. I never got to know him too well.

SS: One of your most famous films was *THIS GUN FOR HIRE*, which made a star of Alan Ladd.

ML: After I read the novel, I called up director Frank Tuttle. I told him I had to play the lead. I said, "Damn, the book describes me—this man with a cribbled, scarred face. Jesus, I was made to play the part!" He told me that they were testing some kid. That was Alan Ladd, but Tuttle used me anyway in the movie."

SS: Laird Cregar was also in *THIS GUN FOR HIRE*.

ML: Oh, God, Laird was a barrel of talent! He was a joyous actor to watch. Laird had such richness of spirit; he just bounced all over the

watch. Laird had such richness of spirit; he just bounced all over the screen; he was really something. He died very young.

SS: Like Sheldon Leonard, you had your own experience with the Dead End Kids. The film was called 'NEATH BROOKLYN BRIDGE.

ML: That was a piece of shit. Huntz Hall was a nut, but the guy I liked was Gabbie Dell, who died a couple of years ago. He was a beautiful, talented, but very sad man. We spent a lot of time together in New York.

SS: Didn't you have some trouble doing a fight scene with Lon Chaney Jr. in *EYES OF THE UNDERWORLD*?

ML: Lon just wanted to go at it. No way, I thought; he was a big guy. So I took him aside and went through it blow by blow, counting one, two, three, four . . . I'd throw a punch, then he would, then I would, and so on. Finally we shot the scene, but not until after a lot of coaching. He was like a dancing bear.

SS: *CLUB HAVANA*, which you made for PRC, was directed by cult figure Edgar G. Ulmer.

ML: Ulmer was a man with great frustrations. When John Huston was fired on *A FAREWELL TO ARMS* with Rock Hudson, where I was dialogue director, Edgar Ulmer took over the second unit before Charlie Vidor came in. Ulmer acted like he was king shit or something. He was a German or Austrian, I guess. He was a road company Fritz Lang.

SS: Speaking of Lang, he directed you in *CLOAK AND DAGGER*.

ML: Lang was a fine director. He wore a monocle. There was a scene in the picture where my character fights with Gary Cooper. Lang took six days to film it. He had me goug-

ing the Coop's eyes and putting my fingers in his mouth. I told Gary, "I can't do it . . . mess up that face and put my dirty fingers in your beautiful mouth. I'm a fan of yours!" He told me not to worry about it. He was a lovely man.

SS: *CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE* was another Tyrone Power movie, directed by Henry King.

ML: Henry King was a very fascinating man. He had a marvelous way of indicating to the actor just what he meant. He wouldn't act it, he'd just give you a gesture. Now when you get a gesture from a director, it is like a key. Henry was most generous in his direction. I pinpoint this man as a great director.

SS: You've mentioned Boris Karloff a couple of times. You actually worked with him in *UNCONQUERED*, which was directed by Cecil B. DeMille.

ML: Oh, I liked Karloff. He was a nice man, like my grandfather. DeMille liked me very much and I was invited to his Christmas party. He had a lot of flair, like a great actor. I like a bit of the actor in the directors I've worked with.

SS: Here's a classic title: *KEY LARGO*, with Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Edward G. Robinson, Lionel Barrymore . . .

ML: I got the part because the screenwriter, Richard Brooks, saw me in a play in New York. He told John Huston about me. That was when I first met John. I especially enjoyed working with Eddie Robinson, who was my favorite rabbi. Barrymore, I don't remember ever seeing; we didn't have any scenes that I recall. I developed the laughing character I played in the film from a guy I knew. The film was getting tense and then I show up as this

laughing hood in a car full of guys from Miami, just as the storm is coming. It sort of changed the mood; Huston liked the idea of the laughing guy.

SS: Fletch Markle directed *JIGSAW*.

ML: Markle, a fellow from Canada, was considered the next Orson Welles. Franchot Tone was the star, but every actor from Broadway and every supporting actor wanted to be in it. There are bits by John Garfield, Burgess Meredith, Henry Fonda, and many others. Being a radio guy, Markle dubbed the whole fucking picture, so a lot of the quality was lost. I got very good notices.

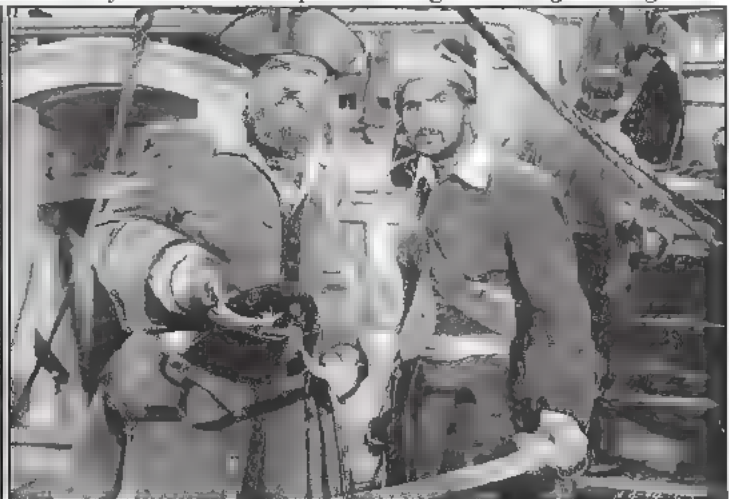
SS: Another famous production was *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE*. Your director again was John Huston.

ML: While filming *THE BLACK HAND*—I thought Gene Kelly was all wrong for that film—I ran into Huston. That's how I got the part of Cobby in *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE*. It was very strange, because I was cast against type. Huston thought the part suggested a short guy who talked very fast. Now, because of Richard Brooks and the *KEY LARGO* story, John thought of me as a stage actor. He asked me to read the sides with a couple of actors seeking the part of Cobby. For their screen tests, I sat off to the side and did the offscreen voice. One of the actors began to fall asleep, no kidding! So, to wake him up I started talking real fast, pointing and gabbing incessantly at him. Huston took me aside and said, "To hell with them! You've got the part." I was the first one cast in the picture.

SS: What about your costars?

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LEFT: Marc Lawrence didn't think much of *JOHNNY APOLLO* (1940) star Tyrone Power, but "Zanuck loved him." Also pictured: Lloyd Nolan and Edward Arnold. **RIGHT:** Victor McLaglen and Marc Lawrence played cutthroats in *THE PRINCESS AND THE PIRATE* (1944), a Bob Hope comedy in which (surprise!) Bing Crosby got the girl!



FU! FU!

by Richard Valley

FOOEY!!!

by Jeff Siegel

The laboratory of the living dead—and an incredible scheme for world control!

—back cover blurb, *The Island of Fu Manchu*

Torture and terror stalk the White House, masterminded by the evil Oriental genius!

—back-cover blurb, *President Fu Manchu*

Murder—madness—mystery—as a girl is turned into a living statue!

—back cover blurb, *The Trail of Fu Manchu*

The paperback covers were exotic, enticing, completely irresistible—raven-haired beauties in snug slit-skirted finery; handsome British heroes (often in bowlers, and sometimes with brollies) in anguished pursuit; and always, always, in the upper left-hand corner, the mesmerizingly evil face of Fu Manchu.

The back covers were equally alluring, promising such tantalizing puzzles to solve as *The Green Hand*, *The Shrivelled Head*, *The Snapping Fingers*, *The Scream in the Night*, *The Poisoned Claw*—and, in an ad on the bottom of the 1962 Pyramid edition of *The Bride of Fu Manchu*, the “heartwarming” novelization of *THE MUSIC MAN*. (Trying to determine why anyone might consider the audience for Dr. Fu Manchu and Professor Harold Hill to be identical—though in my case, surprisingly, it was—well, that was a puzzle indeed!)

For a 13-year-old boy who had long since graduated from the teenage antics of the Hardy Boys, had momentarily grown bored with the countless lost civilizations of Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes*, and had not yet fallen under the spell of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes*, Sax Rohmer’s weird tales of the emerald-eyed *Yellow Peril Incarnate*, *Fu Manchu*; his implacable foe, *Sir Denis Nayland Smith*; and his duplicitous daughter, *Fah Lo Suee*; were just what the *Devil Doctor* ordered. Walking home from school through a community which, perhaps only on reflection, was an MGM small-town set come to life—*Esther Smith’s St. Louis suburb*, *Andy Hardy’s Carvel*—my heart would beat faster as I approached *Kavanaugh’s Ice Cream Parlor* and the chance that a “new” Rohmer novel was waiting on the book racks.

The novels, needless to say, were really far from new. Sax Rohmer had created Dr. Fu-Manchu (the hyphen vanished after the third novel) in 1913, some 50 years before Don Bensen, an editor at Pyramid Books, unleashed those reprints that had caught my eager eyes. (Bensen did a fine job packaging the stories, but for some inexplicable reason choose to reprint them out of order.) Following *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* were 12 sequels (not counting Fu’s unbilled guest stint in 1919’s *The Golden Scorpion*), ending with the 1959 publication of *Emperor Fu Manchu* shortly before the author’s death. The

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The scene could have been lifted from the winning entry at a bad writing contest. The narrator, bored and disinterested, is sitting around his apartment late one evening, not doing very much of anything. A mysterious visitor arrives, douses the lamp, and promises the narrator more mystery and adventure than he can imagine. The fate of the world is at hand! They must leave immediately!

Then the two men have a whiskey and soda.

This is hardly the sort of stuff that whets the critical appetite when it comes time to track the great beasts of literature. And yet that scene launched the career of a series and a character, that, despite almost no redeeming qualities other than the affections of the reading public, have influenced pop culture to this day. That Sax Rohmer was a journeyman writer and that the characters that populate the Dr. Fu Manchu books—including the *Yellow Peril* himself—are wooden and cardboard on their best days doesn’t matter.

Rohmer’s legacy remains, no matter how many times he used an exclamation point, italicized a word, killed someone with an exotic poison, or discovered a body hidden in a secret closet. The big-budget Hollywood action adventure picture can trace its genealogy back to the green-eyed doctor. So can *James Bond*, whose creator was an appreciative fan of the evil genius of the yellow race. Even the much beleaguered *Charlie Chan* owes the *Devil Doctor* a debt, for he was invented to show that not all Asians want to conquer the world.

The mystery surrounding Dr. Fu Manchu is not where he came from or how he was stopped. The mystery increasingly becomes why anyone cared at all

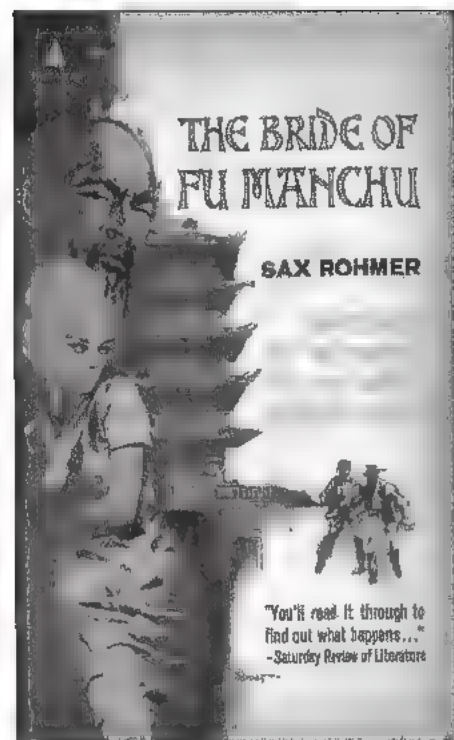
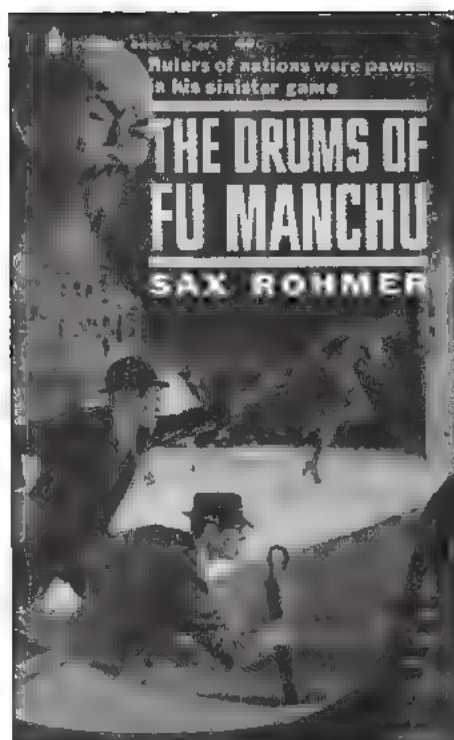
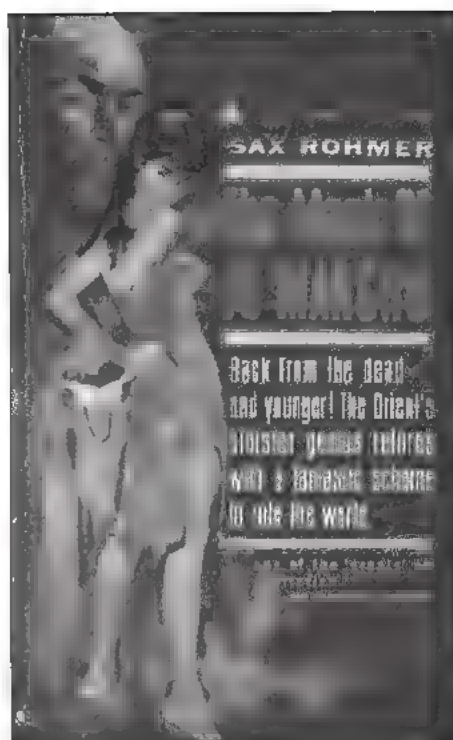
Rohmer’s story, as near as truth can be separated from fiction, sounds a lot like that of many of the popular writers who came of age at the end of the *Pax Britannia*. He was born in 1883 as *Arthur Sarsfield Ward* to working-class parents, and his mother was an alcoholic who died when he was a child. He may or may not have been Catholic, he may or may not have had royal blood in his family, and he may or may not have gone to a decent public school.

What is true is that he was indifferent to almost everything people wanted him to do with his life. He failed at a variety of petty jobs, and his early writings were no more successful than his first jobs. He was one of thousands of pleasant young men (the crowd included *Raymond Chandler* and *P. G. Wodehouse*) knocking around London as free-lance writers in the years between the turn of the century and the *First World War*, scratching out a living from bad poetry, dull essays, and trade journalism. Rohmer and his friends, if his biographer is to be believed, spent their time dreaming up harmless get-rich-quick schemes (mothballs, theatrical management, and perfume among them), drinking, and evading the land

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The popularity of the Pyramid paperback reprints of Sax Rohmer's Fu Manchu stories inspired a series of five films produced by Harry Alan Towers and starring Christopher Lee as Fu Manchu and Tsai Chin as his daughter (named, perhaps in homage to a well-known breakfast drink, Lin Tang).





FU! FU!

Continued from page 70

Wrath of Fu Manchu, a collection containing the title novella and three short stories featuring the doctor, shook the world posthumously in 1973. Two pastiches by Rohmer's friend and biographer, the late Cay Van Ash, saw publication in 1984 (*Ten Years Beyond Baker Street*, which pitted the Devil Doctor against Sherlock Holmes) and 1987 (*The Fires of Fu Manchu*, an "untold" story falling midway through the period covered in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*).

Such was the popularity of the reprints that, before long, producer Harry Alan Towers announced a series of *Fu Manchu* movies starring Christopher Lee and set in the 1920s. (Towers also wrote the scripts under the name Peter Welbeck.) Five films were made between 1965 and 1968; the first two (1965's *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU* and 1966's *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU*) are good, nostalgic fun, the third (1968's *THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU*) somewhat less so, and the last pair (*THE BLOOD OF FU MANCHU* and *THE CASTLE OF FU MANCHU*, both 1968, both victims of slipshod direction by Jess Franco) are zoom-lensed disasters. The '60s were Fu's last great hurrah. Though Lee was heard to intone "The world shall hear from me again" at the close of each picture, the world, except for revivals of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* (1932), the pitiful Peter Sellers farce *THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU* (1980), and the Van Ash pastiches, was at long last safe from the Yellow Peril. A proposed Broadway musical about *Fu Manchu* gave way to a proposed Broadway musical about the impossibility of putting on a Broadway musical about *Fu Manchu*. Even an attempt by Zebra Books to republish the original series one more time failed to catch fire. *Fu* was finished. His day was done.

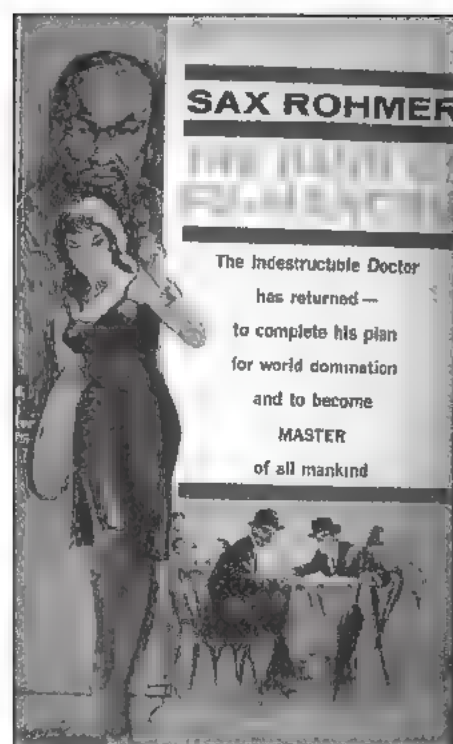
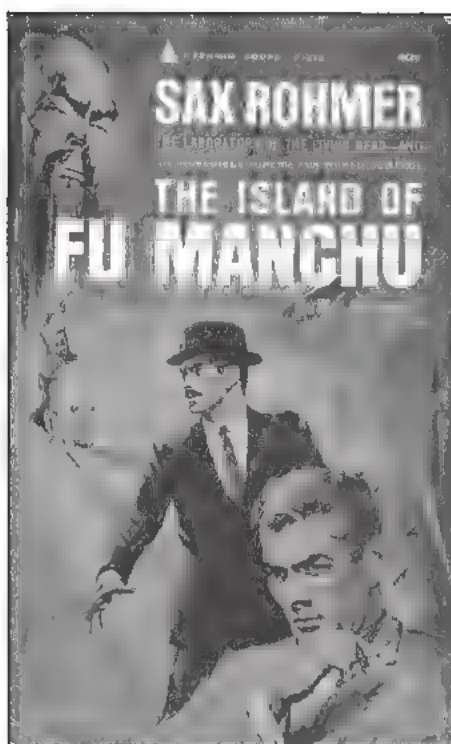
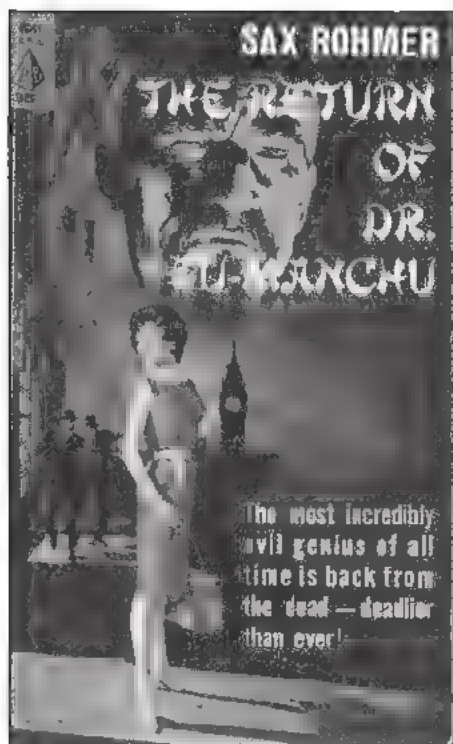
So it was with considerable trepidation that I decided to reread the entire series for this long planned edition of *Scarlet Street*. Should I chance spoiling the memory of many rapt hours of reading (usually when I was supposed to be doing my math homework)? Should

I heed the words of Thomas Wolfe that "you can't go home again"?

I needn't have worried. For a fan of mystery, horror, and adventure, it's a pleasure to go home again when home consists of the twisting alleyways of London's Limehouse, the dark dens of New York's Chinatown, the Tomb of the Black Ape in Egypt, the moonlit voodoo grounds of Haiti, the secret laboratories beneath the balmy French Riviera . . .

Sax Rohmer's moody, pulp-fiction prose holds up remarkably well—and, if the reader is sometimes taken aback by the casual racism and British Imperialism, it must be remembered that these stories are solidly of their period, that in Rohmer's day a typical Englishman's knowledge of the Chinese went no further than the crime-ridden streets of Limehouse ("I made my name on *Fu Manchu* because I know nothing about the Chinese," Rohmer confessed to Cay Van Ash), and that Rohmer is no more guilty than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose tales occasionally jar with their anti-Semitism and stereotypical black heavies.

The first three books—*The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu*, *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1916), and *The Hand of Fu-Manchu* (1917)—stand apart from the rest of the adventures. They are episodic, a series of self-contained short stories loosely tied to the shadowy invasion of England by the Devil Doctor and his murderous minions. (The initial 10 episodes, beginning with the tantalizingly titled "The Zayat Kiss," were published from October 1912 to July 1913 in *The Story-Teller*.) The influence of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures is unmistakable. Standing in for Dr. Watson is another physician with a seemingly minimal practice, Dr. Petrie, whose friend, Nayland Smith, is the brainy hero (though minus a deerstalker and Inverness cape). Time and again, as Holmes and Watson did most notably in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892), Smith and Petrie keep silent vigil in a darkened room, nervously awaiting not a poisonous swamp adder as in the Conan Doyle tale, but the latest death-dealing outrage of *Fu Manchu*'s mad sci-



ence. There is even, as there was for Watson in *The Sign of Four* (1890), a romance for Petrie: the hauntingly beautiful slave girl Karameneh, whom the Englishman wins and loses repeatedly before finally freeing her, at the close of the third novel, from Fu's vile influence.

Following *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*, the Devil Doctor retired for over a decade (not, however, to keep bees), at last resurfacing in *The Daughter of Fu Manchu* (1931), the first novel to feature Fu's bewitchingly treacherous offspring, Fah Lo Suee. Indeed, the book is almost exclusively her story, as we follow the evil plotting of "Madame Ingomar" to wrest control of the secret order of the Si Fan from her father, who appears, old and frail, in the final chapters.

Not only is *The Daughter of Fu Manchu* far less episodic than the three books before it, but it dispenses with Dr. Petrie as narrator (though he continues to play a vital role in the series through 1934's *The Trail of Fu Manchu*). Instead, Rohmer introduces Shan Greville, the first in a series of interchangeable young heroes who are the protagonists of the remaining novels. (Rohmer alternated between first and third person narratives, but the spotlight always remained on the current male partner of Sir Denis Nayland Smith.)

The Daughter of Fu Manchu was a smashing success, but it was only an aperitif for the most famous title in the series: *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932). Here, the living embodiment of the Yellow Peril once again takes center stage—"cleverer, more sinister, and . . . younger," as was proclaimed on the back of the 1962 Pyramid reprint. *Mask* is one of the liveliest of the stories, but its fame rests squarely on the fact that, in the year of its publication, it was snatched up by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and turned into a Boris Karloff spectacular. MGM's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* remains, after 65 years, the best-loved of the Rohmer adaptations, but it plays fast and loose with the original plot, even going so far as to kill off Sir Lionel Barton, one of Rohmer's most durable characters (and one who has much in common with Conan Doyle's Professor George Edward Challenger).

The following year saw the publication of *The Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933), which Cay Van Ash, in *Master of Villainy* (Bowling Green Press, 1972), claimed, "beyond any shadow of doubt, was the best of the Fu Manchu stories, a neatly constructed, sophisticated novel." It is indeed one of the most thrilling tales in the canon. Not to be confused with the film *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU*, in which Fu launches a worldwide bimbo hunt for the wives and daughters of men he hopes to blackmail, Rohmer's plot concerns the Devil Doctor's plans to wed Fleurette, the kidnapped daughter of Dr. Petrie and Karameneh, in order to father a son. (Fu's grown a trifle piqued by Fah Lo Suee's continued efforts to displace him.) The creepy-crawly finale finds Alan Sterling, the current hero after two stints by Shan Greville, trapped in the underground headquarters of the Si-Fan, an army of killer flies, wasps, mosquitoes, centipedes, and spiders swarming over the walls and floor. ("A black spider, having a body as large as a big grape fruit, and spiny legs which must have had a span of twenty-four inches, sat amidst a putrid looking litter in which I observed several small bones, watching us with eyes which gleamed in the subdued light like diamonds. It moved slightly forward as we approached. Unmistakably, it was *watching* us; it had intelligence!")

After the triple knockout punch of *Daughter*, *Mask*, and *Bride*, the next two adventures show a slight falling off in quality. *The Trail of Fu Manchu* (1934) wraps up the loose plot strands of *Bride*, but it is the first in the series to dispense with first-person narration, and suffers for it. (The third-person format, however has one advantage: it allows the reader to "visit" with Fu without the narrator having to be present.) To its credit, *Trail* has an atmospheric opening, inspired by London's actual "great fog of 1934," and builds to a startling finale in which Petrie saves Fu Manchu's scientifically prolonged life in exchange for the lovely Fleurette. ("Your daughter, Dr. Petrie, is returned to you. I shall never again intrude upon your life in any way.") *President Fu Manchu* (1936), which Rohmer himself didn't particularly like, looses

the Yellow Peril on American culture and politics, with more than a passing nod to Huey Long's scandalous rein in Louisiana and the radio ranting of Father Charles Coughlin (in real life a right-wing extremist, but in Rohmer something of an heroic figure) Smith has a new partner in American agent Mark Hepburn and, again, the story is told in the third person. The finale finds the Oriental mastermind presumably going over Niagara Falls (in a boat, not a barrel), but if they couldn't kill Sherlock Holmes at Reichenbach, it's a pretty fair bet that you know Fu will survive

Politics again dominates in *The Drums of Fu Manchu* (1939), a return to form in which the Si-Fan sets out to destroy all the world's dictators but one: Fu Manchu himself. Despots based on Benito Mussolini (Pietro Monaghan) and Adolph Hitler (Rudolph Adlon) are targeted by the Devil Doctor and, in the process, Rohmer comes dangerously close to expressing esteem for his stand in Fuehrer. ("... something in those blazing eyes, in the defiant set of his chin, won an admiration which I believed I could never have felt for him.") The real world was fast changing as the '30s drew to a close, and it was perhaps not the best time for the author to attempt topicality. Rohmer's literary landscape was changing, too: *The Drums of Fu Manchu* and its immediate sequel are both first-person narratives by Bart Kerrigan; Fah Lo Suee has died (Daddums sent her through the deadly Lotus Gate in *Trail*) and returned zombified, a woman without a past, as Koreani; and, for the first time, the reader is torn between Fu's aims (to avert another world war) and Smith's efforts to defeat him. (Rohmer's creation is much more multifaceted than he ever was on film. He is, above all, a man of his word, who even risks capture in *President Fu Manchu* to save the life of a child he has sworn to protect.)

The Island of Fu Manchu (1941) is my personal favorite in the series. It is here that readers encounter the Green Hand, the Snapping Fingers, and the Shrivelled Head, the last a shrunken noggin inexplicably wired for sound and used by Fu as a bizarre communications device! All the familiar elements are in place: Nayland Smith and companion (Kerrigan) following the trail of the Si-Fan across a troubled globe (as in *Drums*), Sir Lionel Barton irascibly holding the key to a vast hidden treasure (as in *Mask*), Fu's fantastic underground lair (peopled by scientific wizards who presumably died decades earlier, as in *Bride*), and the former Fah Lo Suee leading men to their doom—this time as Mamaloi, the Queen of Voodoo. Again, the Devil Doctor's motives are mixed, as on the one hand he entreats Smith and Kerrigan to join him in saving the United States from ruin and, on the other, proclaims himself "at last in a position to dictate to any

and every government in the world." The *Saturday Review of Literature* dubbed *The Island of Fu Manchu* a "thriller de luxe," and they were right on the mark.

The Si-Fan leader rested out the remainder of World War II, but returned in 1948 under the covers of *Shadow of Fu Manchu*. Unfortunately, he was but a shadow of his former self. The story is based on a play by Rohmer in which he'd hoped to bring his vile villain to the Broadway stage. When the Great White Way proved hostile to

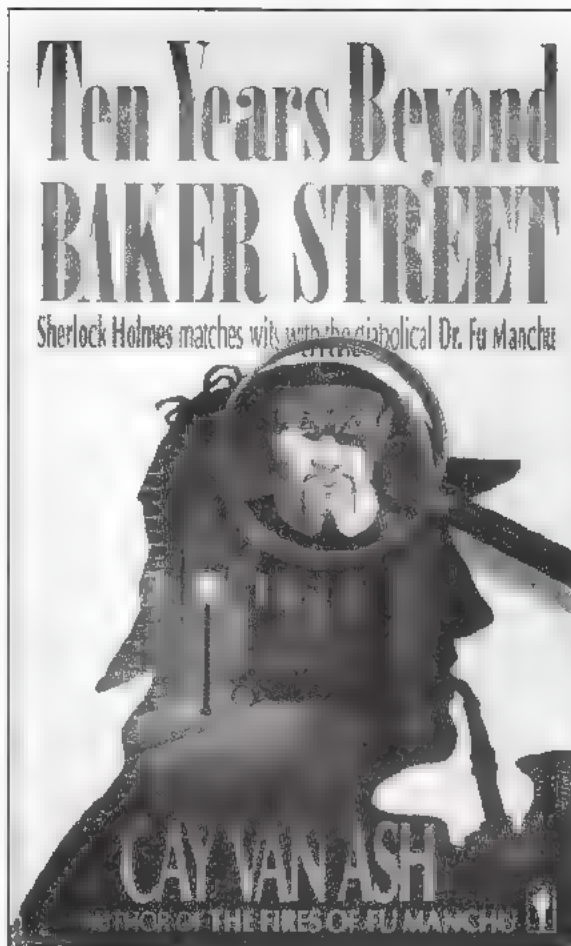
the Yellow Peril, the play became a rather stagnant, stage-bound novel. Once again, though, the real world had undergone a political upheaval, and *Shadow* is the first in the series to concern itself with Communism, which Fu has vowed to wipe off the face of the Earth.

Following *Shadow* came the five-part serial *The Wrath of Fu Manchu*, published in the *Toronto Star Weekly* in 1952. It's not at all a bad little story—better, in fact, than *Shadow*—and it marks the last appearance in print of Fah Lo Suee (here masquerading as Mrs. van Roorden), who has somehow managed to regain her memory. Dear Ol' Dad again comes close to ridding himself of his perfidious brat, but the Devil Daughter survives to plot another day—though, sadly, she never does, the final episodes suffering for her absence.

Tracking down Fu Manchu in the early years of the '60s, I didn't realize how close the last chapters of his saga would bring me to "modern times." Imagine my surprise, then, on discovering that the copy of *Re-Enter Fu Manchu* I'd snatched up in the ice cream parlor was not one of the Pyramid reprints, but a Gold

Medal original published in 1957 and still lurking on the racks. (The two concluding novels were never published in hardcover.) *Re-Enter* is not one of the high points of the canon, but it has the distinction of actually furnishing some plot elements for the film *THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU*, in which, via plastic surgery, Fu creates an exact duplicate of Nayland Smith and instructs him to do his evil bidding while the genuine article is tucked away. The protagonist is Brian Merrick, who takes top honors as the dullest of Rohmer's heroes, and the threat is once again Communism, which the Devil Doctor hopes to eradicate and thus regain China for his own.

China! Surprisingly, it is only in the very last novel, *Emperor Fu Manchu* (1959), that the action takes place on the villain's home turf. Though clearly not up to the level of the Rohmer novels of the '30s, *Emperor* is still a marked improvement over *Shadow* and *Re-Enter*, and a worthy entry on which to close the book. It sports a fast-moving plot, with Smith and undercover agent Tony McKay infil-



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FOOEY!!!

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lord making them the Generation X of King Edward's reign.

Rohmer had other interests, of course, including a preoccupation with Egyptology, the occult, and a woman named Elizabeth Knox. He would eventually marry Knox (secretly, for her family considered him a dolt of the first order), and somehow manage to work the first two interests into his life work.

Rohmer wrote almost five dozen books, countless short stories, and several stage and radio plays in a career that lasted until his death in 1959. Yet *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1913), *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1916), and *The Hand of Fu-Manchu* (1917), which made Rohmer the reputation that has outlived him, were not part of a plan to conquer the popular press or even to create a series character. In fact, Rohmer was an even worse businessman than he was a writer. He spent money without much consideration of where it was coming from, and blindly trusted a variety of literary scoundrels, including an agent who cheated him out of thousands of pounds of foreign royalties.

At the time, Rohmer was so apathetic about the series that Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie, who continually foiled the Yellow Fiend, didn't even have first names. Rohmer wrote the first book (and at the time there was apparently only going to be one book) because he was fascinated by a mysterious Mr. King, the supposed God-

father of London's Chinatown. The two sequels first appeared as magazine serials shortly before Rohmer entered the British Army, and the three years worth of chapters paid the bills at a time when most writers couldn't get published because of a wartime paper shortage.

It was to be 14 more years, when the Depression left Rohmer no alternative, before the doctor reappeared.

That Dr. Fu Manchu (he loses the hyphen in the fourth book) would come out of retirement was not surprising, given Rohmer's need for money. That the doctor's reception would be so overwhelmingly enthusiastic is much harder to believe.

On the surface, there is little to recommend the series, even giving Rohmer the benefit of the doubt for his unique racial vision. Considering that he is the most evil genius in the world, Dr. Fu Manchu is not very bright. He never kills anyone quickly and efficiently when there is a slow and inefficient method available, and there is always one available—usually airborne funguses and hideous, genetically altered creatures. That his methods often fail is only a minor inconvenience.

But where the doctor truly fails as a character comes in his inability to finish off Nayland Smith and Petrie. Given the serial nature of most of the novels he has them in his clutches about a half-dozen times in each

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In *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU* (1966), that ol' Devil Doctor kidnapped the bosomy daughters of the world's leading crackpots, the better to keep abreast of the latest scientific breakthroughs. The taffy pull pictured below (the girl in the middle is named Taffy) somehow failed to make the American cut.



FU! FU!

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trating the bamboo curtain to save the life of a German scientist and battling Fu's new, improved zombies (dubbed "Cold Men") all the way. The Yellow Peril makes his most impassioned plea for Nayland Smith to join him in his war against Communism, since they share at least one common goal—blowing up a secret Russian stronghold. Nevertheless, the two seemingly eternal antagonists each stick to their own time-honored methods. Smith obtains the Si-Fan Register, which will enable him to destroy the entire society, then gets to the stronghold first and sends it sky high. Fu is presumably fried in the blast—just as he was destined to be in each of the Christopher Lee movies.

"The world shall hear from me again!" It isn't very likely. For longtime devotees of Fu Manchu, of Sir Denis Nayland Smith, Dr. Petrie, Fah Lo Suee, Sir Lionel Barton, Karameneh, and the rest, it would be a dream come true, but changing times don't auger well for the return of the Devil Doctor. With news of a new, politically revised Charlie Chan film on the horizon, one in which Charlie may not even be called Charlie, the spine tingles as at the touch of a Cold Man, shrinking instinctively at the thought of what fate might befall the greatest criminal genius of all time. Surely he will be spared such a cruel indignity as modernization, so that, should those emerald eyes ever again gaze upon a world they would make their own, it will be—as ever—on Dr. Fu Manchu's terms alone.

FOOEY!!!

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book. It's not surprising that they escape; what's surprising is that Fu Manchu lets them go at least once because they have put up such an honorable struggle. That's the kind of behavior that drives a careful reader crazy, even allowing for the pulp aspects of the series. It would not take the Continental Op 13 books to send Fu Manchu to prison.

Too, it is hard to overlook the racial aspects, no matter how accommodating a reader tries to be. "Petrie," says Nayland Smith in the first novel, "I have traveled from Burma not in the interests of the British government merely, but in the interests of the entire white race, and I honestly believe—though I pray I may be wrong—that its survival depends largely on the success of my mission." That's not only a bit much for modern audiences, but it was a bit much when Nayland Smith pursued the doctor in a syndicated TV series in the '50s. The producers felt it

was enough to make Fu Manchu a master criminal, and leave it at that.

That racial attitude recedes in the next 12 novels, but it never disappears. The doctor adapts with the times, becoming an agent of international crime organizations and various power groups as political philosophies come and go. But whenever he and Nayland Smith go mano y mano, there is little doubt that the fight between the two men comes down to white vs. yellow.

Yet all this does is explain why Fu Manchu didn't deserve to be popular. The reasons why he was popular are harder to discover. Much of it has to do with Rohmer's idea of a super villain as the focus for the stories, something that had not been done much up till then. Even Professor Moriarty, for all of his evil genius, was just one of the many challenges that Sherlock Holmes faced.

But Fu Manchu is the only challenge Nayland Smith and Petrie have. They don't have time to pursue other cases, they barely have time to fortify themselves with a shot of brandy before the doctor makes the next move in his attempt to restore the Yellow Race to its rightful glory. Given that, it's almost irrelevant whether Fu Manchu makes any sort of narrative sense. History has proven that the idea of his existence makes up for any of his deficiencies.

Rohmer was an innovator in another way, too. Again, though his execution left much to be desired, he understood the need to combine narrative drive with an overwhelmingly exotic atmosphere. Rohmer's use of the false ending—where the plot is seemingly resolved, and the heroes go on their way only to discover that

the villain is not quite dead—was as novel then as it is clichéd today, an unfortunate fixture in everything from James Bond to movies of the week to the DIE HARD and LETHAL WEAPON-styled thrillers. Hollywood, in fact, always appreciated the doctor. Besides the TV program, he had his own radio show and was featured in at least three American and one English film series.

It's probably too kind to say, as Bill Prozini does, that anyone who can suspend disbelief in the silliness of the plots will be hooked from beginning to end, but it is true that that's what Rohmer tried to do. He juxtaposed an England that was safe and secure with the mysteries of the Orient—rare herbs, secret drugs, bizarre creatures, and the like—and played the contradiction for all it was worth. Nayland Smith never runs out of stiff upper lips, no matter how many times he finds himself at the mercy of Fu Manchu's latest indescribable horror. There's something to that, even for those of us in the final decade of the 20th century.

On the other hand, it's still damn hard to believe that the fate of Western civilization depends on Britain keeping its Empire.



THE CHILDREN OF KONG

Continued from page 39

O'Brien's original creation—was more than I could handle and our disagreement turned into a fist fight. Though the blows were quickly forgotten, and easily forgiven, the impasse we had reached in our conflicting philosophies regarding dinosaur films soon brought an end to our friendship.

By then, *Famous Monsters of Filmland* was already in its fourth year, having given Foiry Ackerman ample time to introduce his readers to stop-motion animation wizards Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen. We all knew about 1925's *THE LOST WORLD*, though scant few within our ranks had actually had the privilege of seeing the Willis O'Brien classic. We also glimpsed an occasional still from a seldom seen Ray Harryhausen/Irwin Allen collaboration, Warners' *THE ANIMAL WORLD* (1956), a documentary that sported state-of-the-art animated dinosaurs. Although the O'Brien film is readily available today, *THE ANIMAL WORLD* (which, as far as I know, was never released to television) is still difficult to locate. Harryhausen was conspicuous by his absence in the dino credits of the late '50s/early '60s "giant monster" movies, though his guiding hand would have made all the difference in the world to a film such as *GORGO*—one glimpse of his saurian-like Ymir, from *20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH*, tells us that Harryhausen was the obvious man for the job.

Famous Monsters had, by this time, provided the impetus for several other monster magazines (*Fantastic Monsters*, *Horror Monsters*, *Mad Monsters*, etc.). One of them, Calvin Beck's *Castle of Frankenstein*, would turn monster fans into film scholars. Beck's sporadically published mag matured as we matured. For many of us, *Castle of Frankenstein* wasn't just a magazine; it was a university. For the next dozen years, it kept us abreast of sci-fi/horror/fantasy films. Because editor Beck wrote for an adult audience (one which, largely, did not yet exist), we savored the contents of each jam-packed issue, realizing that the magazine was not only sanctioning our childhood interests, but also implying that such interests need not be relegated to childhood. To so many of us, *Castle of Frankenstein* was the voice of the future.

And so we grew.

By the mid-'60s, most of the nation's youth had thrown aside dinomania for Beatlemania. When Ray Harryhausen finally returned to the dinosaur subgenre, with the disappointing *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*, the 1966 film seemed out of step with the times. Toho had glutted the dino market with a staggering number of bizarre entries—all of which lampooned the subgenre by treating dinosaurs like professional wrestlers—and there was no longer much interest in the serious presentation of dinosaurs. As far as the general public was concerned, *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*'s biggest drawing card was a scantily-clad cave girl named Raquel Welch. Without a poster girl, Harryhausen's next dinosaur film,

VALLEY OF GWANGI (1969), fared less well and, upon its release, seemed even more of an anachronism. Although it boasted better animation effects (and came across as a neat updating of *THE BEAST OF HOLLOW MOUNTAIN*), the rest of the film was strictly routine.

Through the '70s and '80s, the dinosaur film did not prosper. Harryhausen gave up the subgenre completely and went back to Arabian Nights and Greek Mythology. Animator Jim Danforth did some great work with his Oscar-nominated effects in Hammer's *WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH* (1970),

but, again, the public didn't bite. (Ironically, Danforth gained a much bigger audience by good-naturedly lampooning his own dinosaur creations in 1981's *CAVEMAN*.) Few in the film industry considered dinosaurs serious business any longer. Most entries in the '70s were garish, low-budget productions directed by Britisher Kevin Connor. In this series of movies—*THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT* (1975), *AT THE EARTH'S CORE* (1976), *THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT* (1977)—actor Doug McClure battled it out with any number of man-operated rubber dinosaurs. Strictly for the kids, one might say, except that the "inner kid" within us was hardly entertained. In the '80s, dino films were even more sporadic. There was not a single thunder lizard to be seen in the adult-marketed *QUEST FOR FIRE* (1982), a more scientifically reason-

able (though hardly accurate) reworking of *ONE MILLION B.C.* The dino films of the 1980s took a decidedly juvenile bent (as in Disney's 1984 *BABY*, a rough combination of *DINOSAURUS* and *E.T.*, or 1988's animated *THE LAND BEFORE TIME*). Oddly, while pandering to children on the subject of dinosaurs, filmmakers had taken the wonder out of these prehistoric beasts. By personifying them as something cuddly, as in television's *DINOSAURS* sitcom or, even worse, *BARNEY AND FRIENDS*, dinosaurs had been relegated to a mythical world not unlike *THE FLINTSTONES'* Bedrock.

The 1993 release of *JURASSIC PARK* was, of course, the event that restored awe, wonder, and dignity to the dino film subgenre. I was enthralled by the film, but I still wish somebody in Hollywood would finally realize how wrongheaded it is to make children an obligatory feature in dino films (Did *KING KONG* need child protagonists to capture the imagination of a juvenile audience?) The heights of absurdity were reached when parents complained about the adult nature of the picture, as if a fearful representation of dinosaurs was tantamount to putting fangs on the Easter Bunny!

I suspect that Spielberg's film is this generation's *KING KONG* and that it has encouraged a renewed interest in dinosaurs among the children "brave" enough to see it. Wasn't that the way it was for us? Didn't it take a genuinely terrifying film to start the '50s dino craze in the first place? And when you come right down to it, wasn't that televised 1933 feature every bit as violent—and graphically explicit—as *JURASSIC PARK*?

Just sit back and remember . . .



Honey, I'm home!



THE MASK OF FU MANCHU

Continued from page 51

mand! I am only going to give you the very smallest amount—because I want you to be your very self when I hand you over to my gentle daughter!

And Fu Manchu jabs the needle of serum into Terry's neck . . .

It is an incredibly sadistic scene—one which, in actuality, caused the cast to have hysterics of a different type. In Cynthia Lindsay's book *Dear Boris* (Knopf, 1975), Charles Starrett remembered:

Boris was a subtle, good humored man—an actor's actor . . . Never blew a line—except once—in MASK. I, the hero, was lying strapped to a table; he as Fu Manchu was about to inject a hypodermic needle into the back of my neck—we couldn't get it right—it never looked like the real thing—so the director, I think it was Charles Brabin, suddenly yelled, "I've got it!" He sent to the commissary for four especially-baked potatoes—he tucked one of them into the collar of my shirt and said to Boris, "Go ahead—jab it in—it can't hurt him—it will only go into the potato." We started the scene. Boris plunged the needle into (allegedly) my neck—the potato exploded with a great pop, got all over Boris and all over me. The two of us couldn't stop laughing—we went through three more takes, using up the rest of the potatoes with the same results until we were hysterical. Finally the director said—"you two just go home—you're no use—we'll shoot it in the morning."

"This just isn't Terry!" wails Sheila as a doped and dozey looking Terry returns to headquarters, but Von Berg and company agree to Terry's summons to meet Sir Nayland. They depart in a wild storm that night, Terry leering so moronically at Sheila that she gasps. Very effectively, the drugged hero laughs wildly in the storm as his friends are trapped by Fu's forces.

Fu Manchu now has the real sword and mask of Genghis Khan. The sword passes the electricity test.

"It will be your honor to be the first white martyrs to perish at the hands of the new Genghis Khan. I congratulate you!" The film is nearing its climax—and so are the xenophobic one-liners.

"You hideous yellow monster!" shrieks Sheila. "Do you want to destroy us all?"

"Yes!" rants Fu. "This is only the beginning! I will wipe out your whole accursed white race!"

While Stromberg had envisioned Karloff's Fu so turned on by Sheila's nasty zingers that he scooped her up and ran off to have his way with her, she (presumably) retains her honor in the release print. By force of love, Sheila manages to snap Terry out of his trance—and out of his love for Fah Lo See.

However, it's now that MGM proudly presents THE MASK OF FU MANCHU's top tantalizers—the torture scenes . . .

The torture devices are indeed a rich, wild, experience, realized with all of Metro's glistening production value—each a hoot, and each conceived by designer Cedric Gibbons.

There are the "Slim, Silver Fingers"—walls of wicked spikes, which slowly come together, aimed to impale the plump, wild-eyed, sweating Jean Hersholt

There is the crocodile pit, a seesaw weighted by sand; stolid Lewis Stone lies strapped to this sadistic teeter-totter, slowly being dipped into the mire of the crocodiles, each reptile growling and grunting and flashing Jimmy Durante smiles for the camera . . .

Starrett is off to become the drugged, pitiful plaything for Fah Lo See—while Miss Morley is all gussied up in virginal white maiden's robes in the Room of the Golden Peacock, to be a fetishist sacrifice, to be sliced into pieces at a dawn ceremony by Fu and his Sword of Genghis Khan . . .

Dawn. It's like opening day at Yankee Stadium. The Mongols, with torches, march to the ceremony, the extras filling a Metro soundstage. Fu, wearing the Genghis Khan mask, sporting a fruit basket hat that looks like a castoff from Carmen Miranda, takes center stage on a huge altar, before a giant statue of Genghis Khan, which holds the sword. A trumpet blares, and Karloff barnstorms to the shrieking, howling crowd:

"Genghis Khan . . . may he rain down on the white race—and burn them!"

The crowd screams. In march minions, carrying on a sacrificial bed Miss Morley, who swoons as the slaving mob roars and reaches for her, trying to touch the blonde.

"The sacrifice to our God!" rants Fu. "Would you all have maidens like this for your wives?"

A big cheer.

"Then," climaxes Karloff, "conquer and breed! Kill the white man, and take his women!"

A very big cheer. Even the monstrous statue seems excited, as it comes to life, presenting the sword of Genghis Khan to Fu Manchu . . .

"In the blood of Shiva's bride, I baptize this sword!"

But—Sir Nayland has chewed off his bonds to escape the crocodiles, Terry has beaten up those live Academy Awards who wanted to drug him for Fah Lo See, and the



Sir Lionel Barton (played here by Lawrence Grant) was a long-running character in the adventure novels of Sax Rohmer, but he didn't make it out of MGM's THE MASK OF FU MANCHU alive.

men have rescued Von Berg from the Slim, Silver Fingers . . . in a room above the altar, the heroes find an electric ray gun . . . they aim it through the trap door . . . and it zaps the Genghis Khan sword right out of Fu's hands!

Terry runs onto the altar, grabs the sword, and hacks Fu—which, in 1932, must have caused the cheers of the movie audiences to mix with the roars of the screen Mongols. White Man picks up White Woman, and runs for it. The Mongols take this very badly, and charge him, screaming in blood lust. Sir Nayland aims the ray gun lightning down, zapping them all, mowing them down like insects, leaving the ray gun on as the heroes escape, the ray cutting down any Mongols who might happen to slink into its path . . .

Night. A ship back to London. Our little band of heroes—Von Berg, Terry, Sheila, and Sir Nayland—are on deck. Nayland is going to drop the Genghis Khan sword into the sea, so it can never fall into the dragon-nailed hands of another like Dr. Fu Manchu.

"By golly," laughs Von Berg, "after all that's happened, I wouldn't be surprised to see the hand of that fella Fu Manchu come out of the ocean and grab it!"

Sir Nayland goes to drop the sword—and a gong is heard. But it's not Fu Manchu . . .

It's little Willie Fung, comic Chinese actor, then playing Gable's silly servant in *RED DUST*. Plump, jolly, missing front teeth, Willie plays a steward who has come to announce dinner by hitting a gong, and giggles as Stone questions him:

"You aren't by any chance a doctor of Philosophy? Law? Medicine?"

"I no think so, sir!" yuk-yuks Willie, showing his toothless gap. This is a Chinaman Hollywood can live with.

"I congratulate you. Well, as I was saying," says Stone, for the curtain line, "wherever you are, Genghis Khan, I give you back your sword!"

And *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* ends, with a splash.

"God forgive us for shooting what we have," dictated Hunt Stromberg on September 19, 1932. *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* began "retakes and added scenes," carrying on for another month of shooting. One grisly retake bears reporting: on October 18, 1932, Stromberg ordered the scene in which a Fu Manchu minion tosses Sir Lionel's dismembered hand into the headquarters yard reshot:

Retake the shot where the hand drops in—getting a real hand from the morgue and avoiding any bounce . . .

THE MASK OF FU MANCHU finally wrapped at MGM Friday, October 21, 1932, after a bloody two-and-a-

half months of shooting. Final cost: \$327,627.26. Karloff escaped the hothouse Metro climate and returned to Universal, where he was shooting *THE MUMMY* as Metro slowly pieced together *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

As the film reached completion and premiere, there were a couple of curious developments. First of all, MGM's new melodrama got a "hypo" at the box office as CBS premiered a new radio show, *FU MANCHU*, on September 26, 1932. John C. Daly was Fu (not the John Charles Daly of TV's *WHAT'S MY LINE?*). Campana Balm sponsored the half-hour show, produced in Chicago, and Sax Rohmer himself was on hand for the premiere episode. (Harold Huber later replaced Daly; the show ran through April 24, 1933.)

On a more personal level: while Charles Vidor had lost *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, the fired director had

a last laugh at Metro's expense; he secretly wed the movie's leading lady, Karen Morley, in November 1932. To the wrath of MGM, Miss Morley didn't announce the wedding for over a month. The Vidors had a child, Michael, in 1933. By the time they divorced in 1943, Miss Morley's career was all but over, while Mr. Vidor's directorial skills were in top demand. He married actress Evelyn Keyes and, later, Doris Warner Le Roy (daughter of Warner Bros. president Harry Warner), and ultimately returned to Metro to direct such stars as Elizabeth Taylor in *RHAPSODY* (1954), James Cagney in *LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME* (1955), and Grace Kelly in *THE SWAN* (1956). Vidor would be replaced one other time in his career; he died June 5, 1959, while directing Columbia's *SONG WITHOUT END* (based on the life of Franz Liszt), and George Cukor completed the picture.

In an astounding makeup, Boris Karloff goes through amazing adventures in *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* . . .

Weird intrigues, sensations, mysteries, thrills, torture chambers, the fantastic laboratory of the "death ray," the lost tomb of Genghis Khan in the Gobi Desert . . .

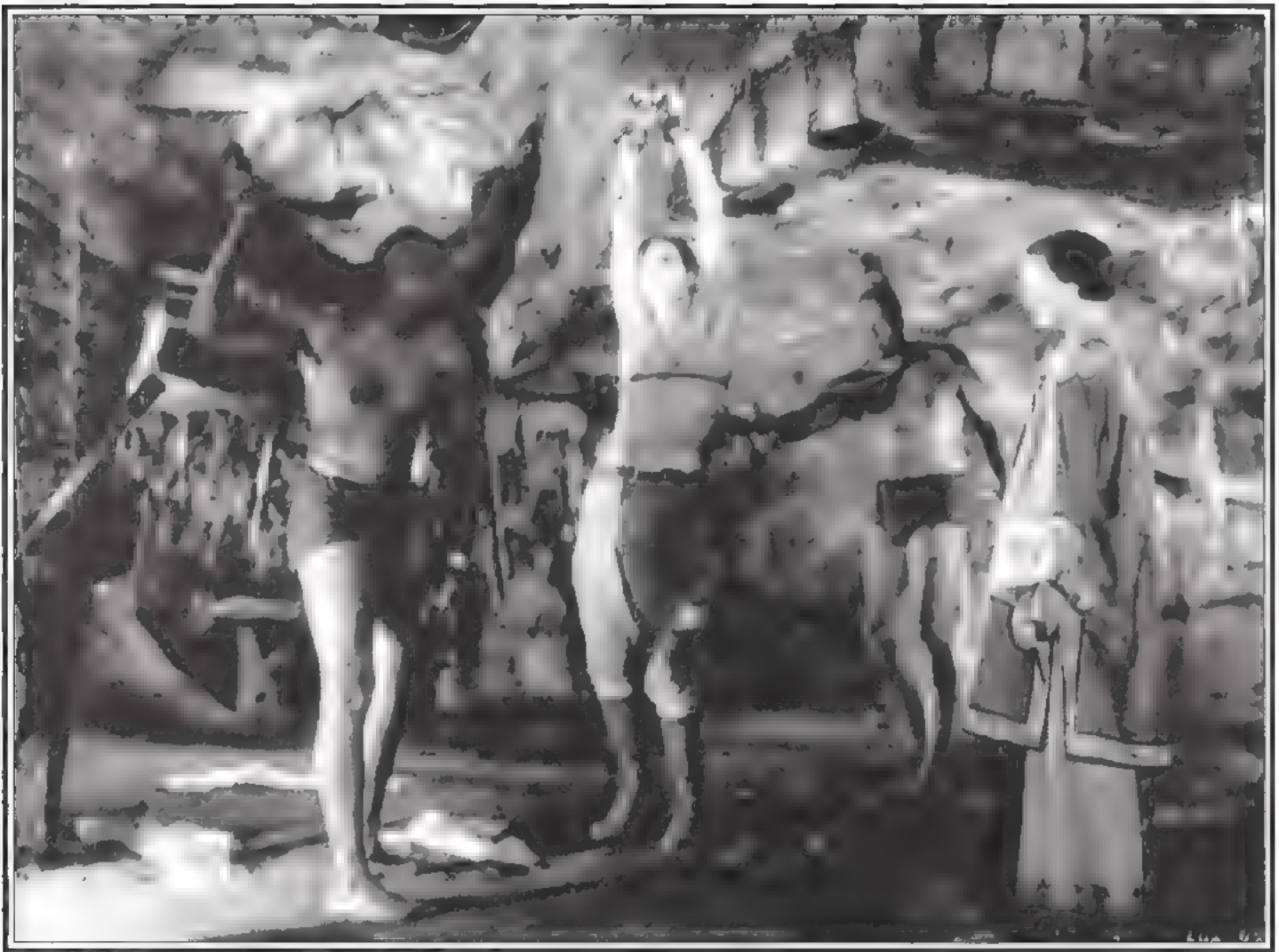
—MGM pressbook

On Friday, December 2, 1932, MGM's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* had a gala New York City premiere at the Capitol Theater, Metro's flagship Broadway movie house. "Boris 'Frankenstein' Karloff" top-lined the posters; "Mad, Oriental tortures! Crazy, heartless desires!" teased the promotional copy.

The big stage show at Major Edward Bowes' 5,486-seat Capitol offered a show business history curiosity: the headliner was Bing Crosby, and the emcee was Bob Hope—eight years before they teamed for Paramount's *ROAD TO SINGAPORE*!



The insidious Dr. Fu Manchu (Boris Karloff) prepares his deadly death ray while daughter Fah Lo See (Myrna Loy as the character named Fah Lo Suee in the Sax Rohmer novels) subtly shows alarm.



"Faster! Faster!" cries Myrna Loy, a line of dialogue usually only heard in the '30s during a car chase. MGM's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* (1932) is one of the decade's sexiest and kinkiest horror films.

As for *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* . . . Most critics were aghast. The movie's merry sadomasochism appalled many of the fourth estate, and Karloff's gleefully mad Fu caused a number of nervous critics to yearn for Warner Oland's kinder, gentler *Yellow Peril*. *Variety* righteously hissed the picture, as myopic as ever to the show's most juicy offerings:

This time they should have let the doctor rest in peace . . . The diabolical stuff is piled on so thick at the finish, audiences are liable to laugh where they oughtn't. The audience at the Capitol did . . . It's strange how bad such troupers as Stone and Hersholt can look when up against such an assignment as this. Miss Morley, miscast, is never her sophisticated self in this picture, and disappointing. . . Boris Karloff, borrowed from Universal, makes the doctor a monster instead of the cunning, shrewd fellow that he usually is. That Karloff is still doing the Frankenstein Monster is hardly concealed by a mandarin's robe. Myrna Loy, as the wicked daughter, is playing stock

Of course, Karloff's wildly wicked Fu Manchu was thespic light years away from his beautiful, bewildered Monster; over the decades, he became the screen's definitive, most famous Fu Manchu, while Miss Loy's

"stock" Fah Lo See won praise as one of the most exquisite villainesses of '30s melodrama. With Karloff's crazy bravado, Miss Loy's evil exotica, and MGM's *Big Parade of Torture Devices*, *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* became the greatest horror comic book of Hollywood's Golden Age. Domestic gross, \$377,000, foreign gross, \$248,000.

Net profit: \$62,000.

How might *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* have haunted the liberal consciences of its stars? Karloff became one of the founders of the very controversial Screen Actors Guild in 1933. Myrna Loy reminds readers throughout her memoir of the various liberal causes she campaigned for throughout her life. Karen followed *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* with such "social conscience" films as UA's *OUR DAILY BREAD* (1934) and Warners' *BLACK FURY* (1935), actively campaigned for the Progressive Party platform in 1948, and, in 1951, became one of the tragedies of the Hollywood "Witch Hunt," as at least three actors named her as a Communist in the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings (where Miss Morley had taken the Fifth Amendment). She soon dropped out of sight in the entertainment world; she lives today in Los Angeles, widowed, alone, and rejecting requests for interviews and autographs.

When I played Fu Manchu in the Republic serial, *DRUMS OF FU MANCHU*, I'd go to a theater nearby here in Hollywood, where they showed it, and sit among the kids (they never recognized me)—and I loved their reactions. Within two or three episodes, they were on my side! It was because I was brighter than the others, and the kids went for intelligence, whether it was bad or good. But the PTAs—they didn't like it at all, because the kids would wet their beds after seeing it. And the Chinese government raised plenty of Hell! And that's childish, because I consider Fu Manchu a fairy tale character—it's not to be taken seriously, for God's sake!

—Henry Brandon

Fu Manchu returned over the decades in various incarnations. He leered in the mid-'30s in *WOW Comics* and *Detective Comics*; 1939 saw a syndicated *SHADOW OF FU MANCHU* 15-minute serial radio show. In 1940, Republic released the serial *DRUMS OF FU MANCHU*, starring the late Henry Brandon (the evil "Barnaby" of Laurel and Hardy's 1934 *BABES IN TOYLAND*) as a bald pated Fu, and directed by William Witney and John English. (Republic released a feature release of the serial in 1943.)

The Yellow Peril returned in the 1945 Spanish feature, *EL OTRO FU MANCHU*, directed by Ramon Barreto, with Manuel Requena in the title spot. In 1950, NBC produced a pilot for a *FU MANCHU* teleseries, starring John Carradine as Fu and Sir Cedric Hardwicke as Sir Nayland, and directed by William Cameron Menzies. Retrospectively mouth-watering, the series reportedly failed to sell due to sponsor dissatisfaction with scripts. In 1955, Republic paid Sax Rohmer a reported \$4 million for the Fu Manchu film/TV/radio rights—hence the 1956 syndicated TV series *THE ADVENTURES OF FU MANCHU*, with Glen Gordon as Dr. Fu Manchu; the show fizzled after only 13 installments.

Come 1965, Christopher Lee added Dr. Fu Manchu to his horror repertoire in *THE FACE OF FU MANCHU*, a British production, written and coproduced by Harry Alan Towers, directed by Don Sharp, filmed in Ireland and released by Seven Arts. A series of Lee Fu Manchus followed: *THE BRIDES OF FU MANCHU* (1966), *THE VENGEANCE OF FU MANCHU* (1968), *BLOOD OF FU MANCHU* (1969), and *CASTLE OF FU MANCHU* (1972), all with Lee, along with Tsal Chin, who played Fu's evil daughter in all five films. When Fu Manchu stirred once more cinematically, it was pure farce: *THE FIENDISH PLOT OF DR. FU MANCHU* (1980), directed by Piers Haggard, and starring Peter Sellers in the dual roles of Fu Manchu and Nayland Smith. It wasn't nearly as much fun as the 1932 movie—and, sadly, was Sellers' final film.

Meanwhile, in 1972, MGM had conceived the delightful idea of theatrically releasing a horror classic triple bill: *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, Tod Browning's 1935 *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*, and the Rouben Mamoulian 1932 *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE* (made, of course, by Paramount, but long imprisoned in the Metro vaults since the MGM Spencer Tracy version of 1941).

It was a different world now . . . one of "social consciousness." Racial sensitivity teetered on paranoia . . .

And *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* got nailed.

On May 7, 1972, *Variety* reported that the Japanese-American Citizens League had fired off a letter to MGM, requesting that *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* ". . . be removed from its catalogue immediately" and protesting

that the 40-year-old movie was "offensive and demeaning to Asian-Americans." The League lamented that the vintage melodrama "falsely depicts Asians as a mindless horde blindly worshipping the bloody activities of Genghis Khan and Fu Manchu. When United States Foreign Policy is reaching out for understanding of Asian people, this rehash of Yellow Peril cannot be tolerated by any patriotic American . . ."

The League also wailed that white actors had all the speaking roles, while the Asian actors were only extras, and that "this insulting pattern of discrimination in motion picture casting does not need reinforcement."

MGM, throughout the brouhaha, declined comment. Yet the 1990s would have its politically correct way with *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

Although many film buffs believed that Karloff's magnificent leer, Myrna Loy's evil oomph, the Genghis Khan mask and sword, the smiling crocodiles, the great title, and the "wild and woolly" reputation would make *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* an ideal MGM/UA Video release, they were long disappointed. Mysteriously, *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* had failed, year after year, to appear on the video market. MGM/UA Home Video calmly denied that racism has anything to do with the film's failure to integrate into the video population. Some fans were skeptical, fearing that MGM was holding *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU* hostage due to the 60-year-old film's sociological naivete.

Then, come Fall 1992, MGM/UA sought to put all rumors to rest—and, indeed, released *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

And the fans got a brand new shock.

In an age where Universal restored Lugosi's climactic groans as the stake is driven into his heart in *DRACULA*, and Little Maria's splash into the lake in *FRANKENSTEIN*, MGM/UA released a cut version of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*. The torture devices stayed in, the zingers came out. Among the cuts

Karloff's line to Starrett after the fake sword shrivels, "You accursed son of a white dog!"

Some of Myrna Loy's three "Faster! Faster! Faster!" as minions whip the half-naked Starrett.

The word "Christian" from Karloff's vow to Karen Morley that she, Hersholt "and your compatriot, Sir Nayland Smith, will have the pleasure of entering your Christian heaven together."

And, perhaps inevitably, Karloff's apocalyptically-delivered, "Would you all have maidens like this for your wives? Then conquer and breed. Kill the white man and take his women!"

Of course, the film is still fun, despite the cuts. But what a commentary on today's society—that MGM/UA felt compelled to release a "politically correct" version of 1932's *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

So the controversy goes on, at least in the world of movie fans. Many "liberal" film buffs, oddly unoffended by a horde of garishly exploited FREAKS crawling through mud to mutilate a woman, still curl up their lip at the "racist" name of *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*.

Times are still complex. And, as such, we might expect *THE MASK OF FU MANCHU*, a funny, campy, almost endearingly naive comic book of 1930s movie melodrama, to remain the sad, slant-eyed skeleton in MGM's horror movie closet.



For news of the restored *MASK OF FU MANCHU*, turn to *SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN* on page 26.

SHELDON LEONARD

Continued from page 63

was an adventure. There are countless stories connected with it and countless associations. My friendship with Bill Cosby remains to this day.

SS: Any stories of the TV industry?

SL: The story that would not normally be covered by such an interview as this—which is one of the highlights of what we laughingly call my career—is the episode with Cosby which introduced him into broadcasting. Up until that time, black people simply had not been accepted by television on a level of equality with whites. All the TV stations south of the Mason Dixon Line would literally secede from the network if you showed blacks on a level of equality. I had that experience on *THE DANNY THOMAS SHOW* where we had Amanda Randolph, a very talented black character actress. Whenever Danny put his arm on her shoulder, I'd get mail saying things like, "When I want to see a white man making love to a gorilla, I'll go to a freak show."

SS: Good God!

SL: And when I did *THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW*, I had Greg Morris in an episode in which Dick Van Dyke thought the babies had gotten mixed up in the hospital and he'd gotten the wrong baby, only to discover that the baby that he thought belonged to him was the baby of Greg Morris and his wife.

SS: That's a TV classic!

SL: The response was very, very affirmative. When I went to New York

to get the president of NBC to okay my use of Cosby in the show—because the networks were scared to death of the use of black people on that level—when I went to New York, I used the episode with Greg Morris as ammunition to indicate that the times had changed, and that such fear of adverse reaction was no longer justified. I succeeded in getting Cosby on the air in spite of the fact that there was a great deal of apprehension on the part of the network and the agencies. That accomplishment, because it opened the door for black actors—I think that's possibly the most memorable aspect of my work in television.

SS: Not bad for a gangster! But let's not forget that you played J. Edgar Hoover in *THE BRINKS JOB*. You were on the other side of the law for a change!

SL: I did it for Billy Friedkin, the director. He asked me to do it and I thought he was crazy. (Laughs) I still think he was crazy, but I said, "What the hell! You want me to do it, I'll do it."

MARC LAWRENCE

Continued from page 69

ML: Louis Calhern was great. I did the play *GOLDEN BOY* with him in 1939 and Louis ad libbed his entire part in blank verse. Incredible! Sterling Hayden was a strange guy. I thought he was miscast. He brought no deep Greek pathos to the part; there was no sense of urgency in Sterling's performance.

SS: And Monroe?

ML: Marilyn, I loved. But the Goddamn Stanislavski teachers over-intellectualized her gifts and ruined her. I remember coming out of the Actors Studio in New York; it must have been 1950 or 1951. It had started to rain and I hailed a cab. At 59th Street, I saw Marilyn standing on a corner. Her hair was disheveled under a scarf and she wore no makeup. We went for coffee and talked for two

hours. When she looked at you, she would squint because she was nearsighted. Right in the middle of the conversation, she said, "Want to make love to me? God, I don't think sex meant anything to her. A lot of guys could have had her simply by being nice. She was a beautiful child, a splendid, confused child. Rita Hayworth was like that, too—just a lovely child inside."

SS: Let's quickly mention a couple of your later films. *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN*

ML: Part of the film was shot in Thailand. I took a 17-hour flight to Bangkok and on to a bunch of islands. They did one shot of me over a hill, said cut, and then I waited 10 days! Then they sent me back to California. Then I went to London to finish my scenes and spent eight weeks there because the sets weren't ready. It took them five weeks to complete the interiors.

SS: And *MARATHON MAN*?

ML: Olivier was very British and standoffish—not like my pals Stanley Baker and Richard Burton, who were warm. Olivier was a bit sad. When we did *MARATHON MAN*, he was very ill, but he was a remarkably disciplined. That story about Olivier's advice to Dustin Hoffman, who they said stayed up all night for days to look haggard, to "try acting," is apocryphal. No, Dustin didn't go that far. But Olivier's relationship with the director, John Schlesinger, sometimes was strained. John would say, "Oh, Larry, just leave out those lines" right in the middle of shooting a scene. Olivier finally exploded and said, "John, I believe in the rhythm of the speech; I cannot unlearn what I have learned. If you must cut what I say, cut the Goddamn words in the editing room!" I agreed.

SS: And finally, how would you describe Marc Lawrence?

ML: I never think of myself a character actor, that was never my presence. I'm very distinct, with dark eyes, pitted face. I'm a type—the tough guy, cold, sometimes comic, with a bitterness underneath. As for Hollywood: ha! Hey, they'll fuck when they can. I don't feel bad about leaving that whorehouse. Some guys can get through it in pictures today. Nicolas Cage and Eric Roberts have something, although both are undisciplined. Still, ain't it somehow wonderful, this land of make believe?



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SCREEN

Continued from page 32

Bond; Bond regulars Bernard Lee, Desmond Llewelyn, and Lois Max well; and Bond beauties Claudine Auger, Luciana Paluzzi, and cult fave Martine Beswick (who, in an instance of THUNDERBALL's many missed opportunities, doesn't even rate an onscreen death, much less a layer of gold paint).

This Deluxe Edition contains over nine hours of material, including the documentaries THE INCREDIBLE WORLD OF JAMES BOND, THE MAKING OF THUNDERBALL, and THE THUNDERBALL PHENOMENON, trailers, ads, storyboard art, posters, stills, radio spots, and, on the analog tracks, special commen-

tary by cast and crew (including CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON's Ricou Browning) and an alternate title song: "Mr. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang," sung by Dionne Warwick.

No, it's not the best Bond, not by far, but this boxed set still holds enough treasures to make it well worth owning.

—Drew Sullivan

RECORD RACK

Continued from page 55

For additional insights into the romantic, lyrical Goldsmith, I also highly recommend the lesser-known STAGECOACH (coupled with THE TROUBLE WITH ANGELS on Main-



Jake Gittes returned in THE TWO JAKES (1990)

stream MDCD 608) and the original LP of the exotically sensual JUSTINE (Monument SLP18123), the latter also partly an homage to the lush strings of Newman's Fox orchestra. Goldsmith's recent digital rerecording of Alex North's A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (Varese Sarabande VSD-5500) provides many sensitive and dramatic cues previously unavailable on the original soundtrack album and is beautifully performed and engineered. For a collection of jewellike melodies from Hollywood's most intensely lyrical period, UNCHAINED MELODY: THE FILM THEMES OF ALEX NORTH (Bay Cities BCD 3010), from the amazing catalogue of Bruce Kimmel's late, lamented Bay Cities label, is well worth searching out.

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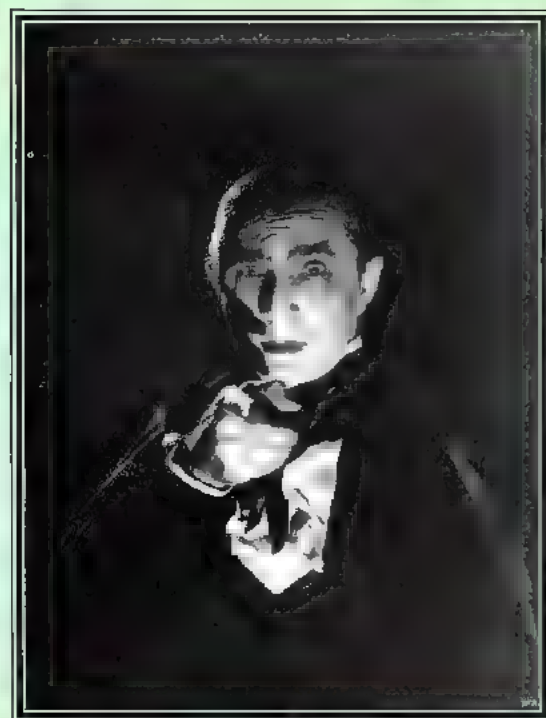
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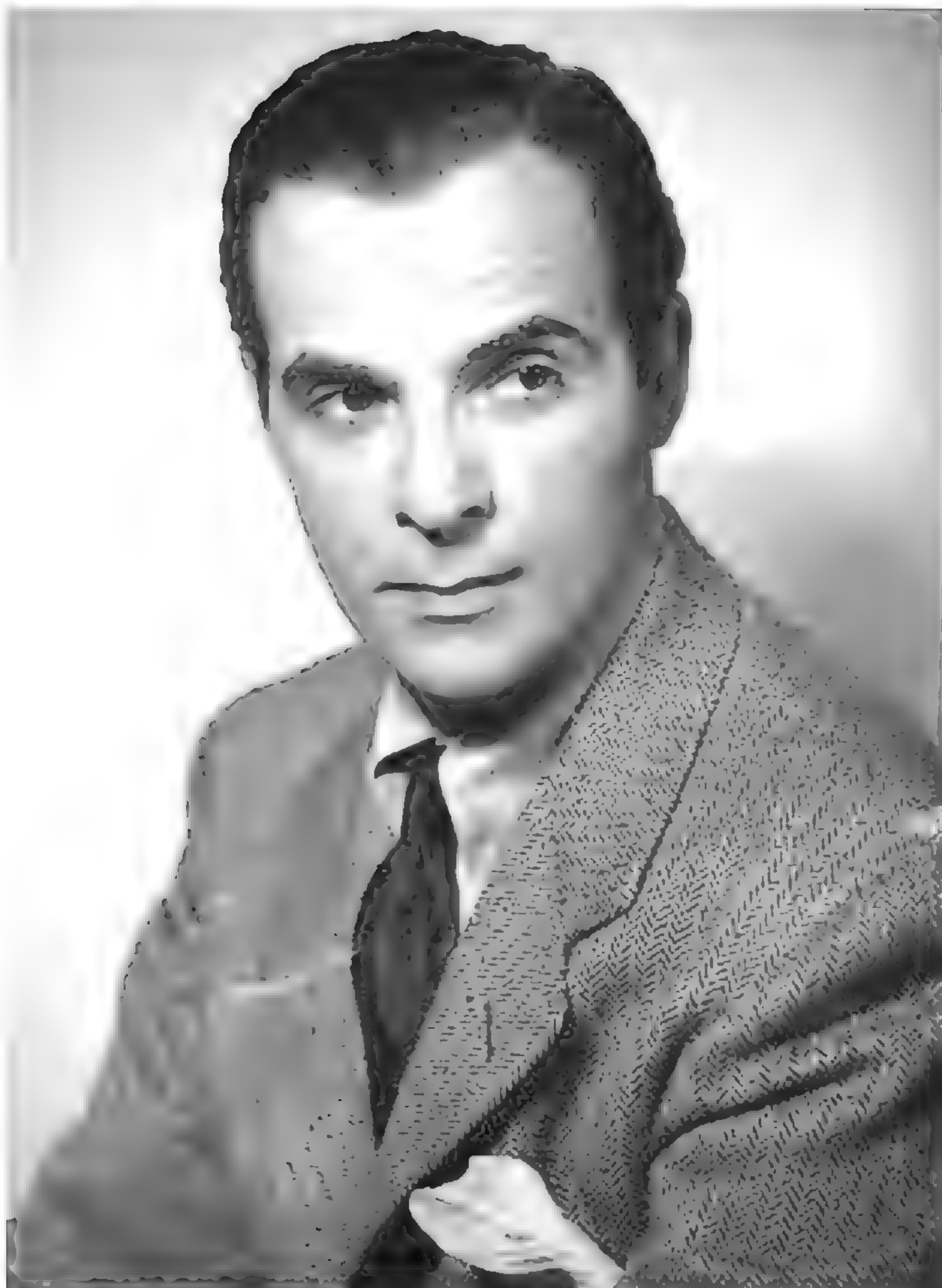
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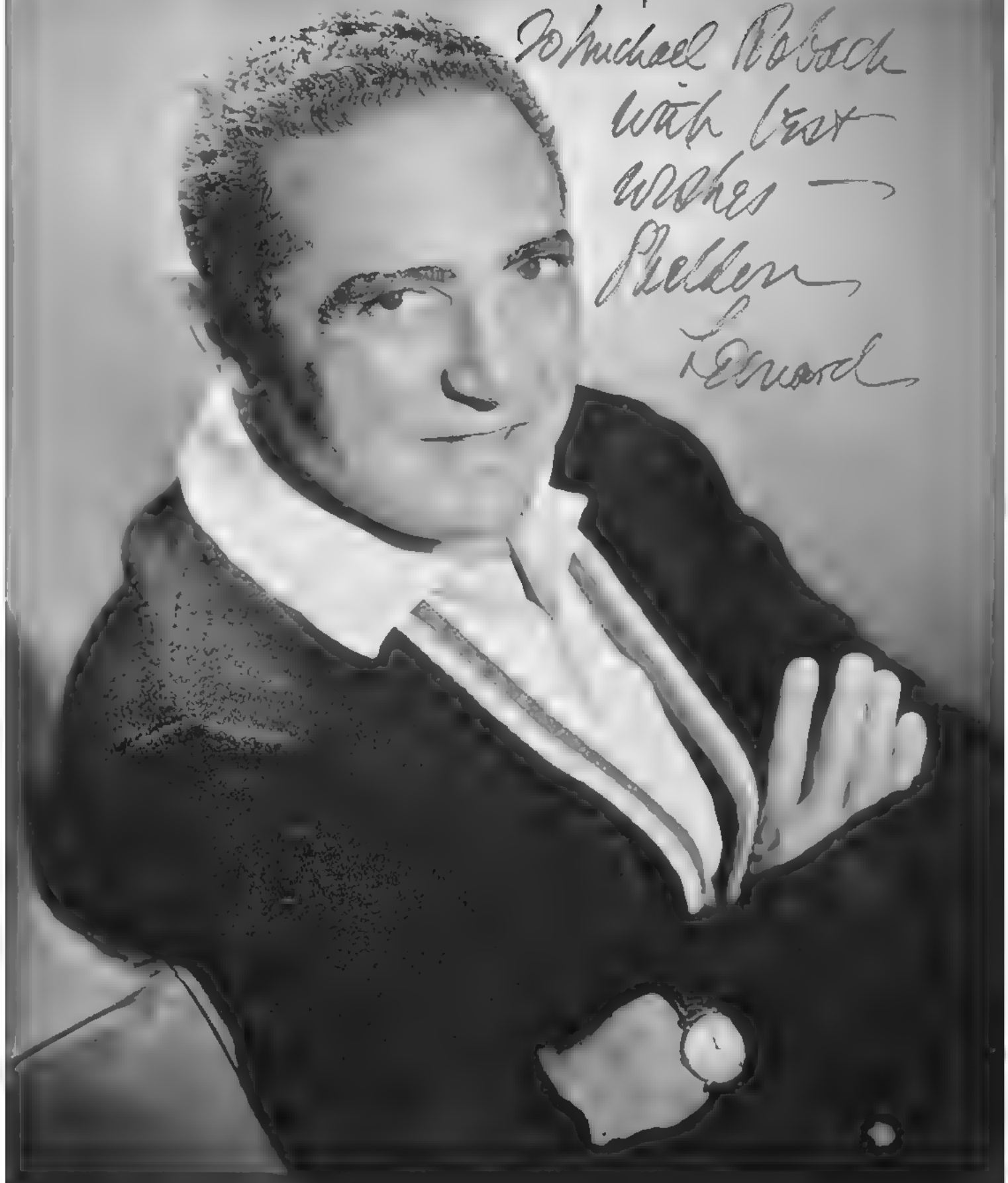
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To Michael Robach
with best
wishes —
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The MASK OF FU MANCHU



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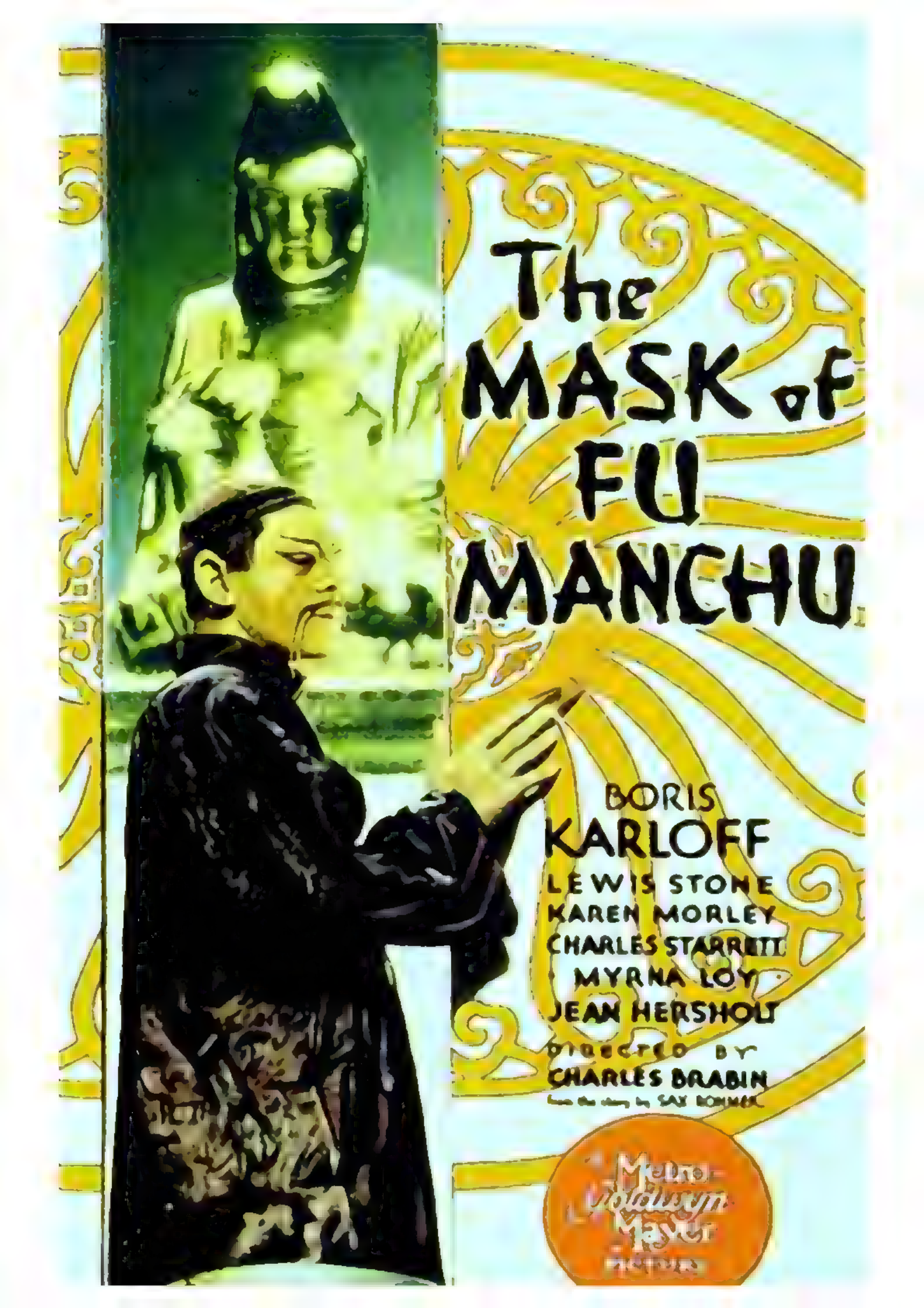
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